

TELEVISION NEWS BROADCASTING AND JOURNALISM IN TURKEY

The Impact of Political, Economic and Socio-Cultural Change in the 1990s

Melek ATABEY

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Department of Culture, Communication and Societies

Institute of Education

University of London

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate current issues in Turkish journalism with specific reference to television news broadcasting. It does so by combining two main theoretical approaches to the study of news production: the political economy perspective and the culturalist view, both of which are critically explored as part of the research. In collecting data, various methods were employed; interviews with journalists, and quantitative and qualitative analysis of news programmes.

The study consists of two main parts. At the macro level, a review of recent changes in broadcast media around the world, and the main theoretical perspectives on news and journalism with regard to Turkish television news are followed by the examination of the historical development of journalism, and its present socio-economic and professional context in Turkey. At the micro level, the study focuses on television news. A general overview of news broadcasting in Turkey is provided to explore the significance of television news for the Turkish public. The remaining chapters of the study analyse coverage of domestic political and economic events, and foreign news stories on six main television stations, with regard to their quantitative and qualitative content. The findings indicated that the commercial, institutional, and ideological stance of television channels influenced the content of news stories. Moreover, the analysis of popular news items in news programmes, and the case studies of reality based programmes indicated a noticeable tendency for the tabloidisation and commercialisation of broadcast journalism. Therefore, the study concludes that the privatisation of the broadcast media did little to encourage or provide either diversity or qualitative improvement in the provision of news. This, it is argued, was directly related, at the structural and professional levels, to the general political and economic situation of the country, as well as the legal pressures on news media, and the failure of journalists to organise in order to establish agreed standards for broadcast journalism, and claim broader freedom from the political establishment.

The thesis concludes with a critical appraisal of the relationship between the macro and micro level factors influencing journalism and news production in Turkey. These are discussed in the light of the main theoretical approaches and research findings of the present study.



To

Rusen, Murat, Sinan Atabey

and

the loving memories of Sami Atabey and Dorothy Holmes

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	3
Table of Contents	5
List of Tables	10
 Introduction	 11
 Chapter 1: Study of Television News and Journalism	 17
1.1. Changing Broadcasting Environment and Television Journalism	18
1.1.1. The Commercialisation of Television News	20
1.1.2. The Globalisation of Television News	24
1.1.3. The Democratisation of Public Sphere and Television Journalism	28
1.2. The Context and Theoretical Framework of the Study	31
1.2.1. The Theoretical Framework of the Study	33
1.3. The Methodological Dimensions of the Research	48
1.3.1 Content Analysis	50
1.3.1.1. Sampling	52
1.3.1.2. Quantitative Analysis of News	52
1.3.1.3. Qualitative Analysis of News	53
1.3.2. Interviews	54
1.4. Conclusion	54

Chapter 2: Socio-Economic Context of News Production in Turkey	56
2.1. The Evolution of Journalism and Newspapers	56
2.2. Development of Broadcast Media	63
2.3. Socio-Political Context of the 1980s and Turkish Media	68
2.4. Political Tendencies and Turkish Media	75
2.5. Commercialisation, Privatisation, Concentration	80
2.6. Conclusion	87
 Chapter 3: Legal, Organisational and Professional Context	 89
3.1. Legal Framework of Journalism and News Media	90
3.1.1. Press Freedom	90
3.1.2. Broadcasting Freedom	97
3.2. Organisational Pressures	104
3.2.1. Autonomy, Impartiality and TRT's Journalists	104
3.2.2. Control, Self-Censorship, and Journalists in Private Channels	106
3.3. Professional Factors	108
3.3.1. Trade Unions	108
3.3.2. Professional Associations and Press Council	111
3.3.3. Press Card	112
3.3.4. Ethical Issues	113
3.4. Education and Training of Journalists	115
3.4.1. Education and Training of Turkish Journalists	118
3.5. Conclusion	121

Chapter 4: The Structure of Television News Broadcasting	123
4.1. Television as a Source of Information in Turkey	124
4.2. Explosion in Television News	127
4.3. Evening News Programmes	129
4.4. Advertisements and Commercialisation of Television News	129
4.5. Anchorpersons	130
4.6. Constructing the Image: Sets	132
4.7. Content Analysis of News Programmes	133
4.7.1. Total Duration and Number of News Items	136
4.7.2. Headlines	136
4.7.3. Style and Narrative	137
4.7.4. Technical Structure	137
4.8. Conclusion	139

Chapter 5: Reporting Political and Economic Issues	141
5.1. Politics and Television News	143
5.2. General Features of Domestic Political and Economic News	146
5.3. Case Studies	153
5.3.1. Relations Between European Union and Turkey	153
5.3.2. European Customs Union on Television News	156
5.3.2.1. Pros and Cons of the European Customs Union	157
5.3.2.2. Human Rights, Economy and Diplomacy	165
5.3.3. Demonstrations of Civil Servants	173
5.3.3.1. Background News: Coverage of the Weekday Demonstrations	174
5.3.3.2. The Demonstration on 17 December 1994	177
5.4. Conclusion	182
 Chapter 6: Reporting Foreign News	 186
6.1. Reporting from International Sources	188
6.2. Drawing the News Geography	192
6.3. Case Studies	195
6.3.1. News Breaks Out in Chechnya	197
6.3.1.1. Main Opinions and Perspectives on Chechnian Conflict	198
6.3.1.2. Introducing and Commenting on the Crisis	200
6.3.1.3. Main Events and the Credibility of Information	203
6.3.1.4. Representing the Consequences and Reactions	206
6.3.2. News Coverage of Bosnian War	207
6.3.2.1. News from the Bosnian Front	210
6.3.2.2. Aid Appeals for Bosnia	220
6.3.2.3. Bosnian War and Turkish Politics	225
6.4. Conclusion	227

Chapter 7: Reporting Popular News and Reality Television	230
7.1. Tabloid Journalism: An Overview	232
7.2. Popular News on Turkish Television	236
7.2.1. Analysis of News Programmes	237
7.2.2. Human Interest Stories	239
7.2.3. Covering Crime News	248
7.2.4. Tragedy and Accidents	252
7.2.5. Advertisement or News?	258
7.3. Reality-Based Programming	259
7.3.1. Reality Programmes on Turkish Television	262
7.3..2. Case Studies	264
7.3.2.1. Söz Fato'da	264
(Fato's Turn to Speak, Kanal D, 28.8.1995)	
7.3.2.2. Sicagi Sicagina	269
(Hot on the Spot, Show TV, 30.8.1995)	
7.3.2.3. Polis Imdat	272
(Police Help, ATV, 6.9.1995)	
7.4. 'Paparazzi' Programmes and Sports Magazines	274
7.5. Conclusion	274
 Conclusion	 276
 Appendix	 282
 Bibliography	 287

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: The Conglomeration of the Turkish Media	85
Table 4.1: Circulation of Major National Dailies (December 1994)	125
Table 4.2: Number and Duration of Newscasts on 12 December, 1994	127
Table 4.3: Average Length and Percentage of Commercial Breaks in News Programmes	130
Table 4.4: Duration and Number of News Items	135
Table 4.5: News Stories by Technical Inputs	138
Table 5.1: General Election Results in 1991 and 1995	145
Table 5.2: Percentage of News Stories by Topics	147
Table 5.3: Percentage of Main Actors in Domestic News Stories	149
Table 5.4: Percentage of the Government and the Opposition Stories	150
Table 6.1: Percentage of Domestic and Foreign News Stories	192
Table 6.2: Percentage of Foreign News Stories by Location	194
Table 7.1: Percentage of Popular News Stories	238
Table 7.2: Percentage of Popular Main Actors in News Programmes	238

INTRODUCTION

The main function of journalism is to provide continuous, and reliable information for people to make sense of their own environment and the world, and subsequently form their evaluations of political and social structures, policies, actors and events. This depends on the existence of news media and journalists that are independent from direct government control, as well as control by powerful economic interests. However, as documented by earlier research, news production does not take place in a vacuum, and even in the most liberal democratic societies there are important legal, organisational and financial constraints, that affect the work of journalists. In addition to these external factors, working conditions, and professional values of journalists also have an impact on news. Thus, news is an end product of a complex set of political, economic, social and professional processes and institutions.

The present study attempts to investigate these external and internal factors, within the specific case of Turkish journalism and television news reporting. It argues that the current practices of journalism and news broadcasting in Turkey, have been profoundly influenced by the political and socio-economic context of the last two decades. The constitutional changes implemented in aftermath of 1980's military intervention, and the free market economy adopted by successive governments since then, have accelerated the process of change in all sections of the society. By the 1990s Turkey seemed to be facing serious problems. As far as the impact of political and economic developments are concerned, the Kurdish insurgency in southeast Anatolia, the increasing Islamic fundamentalism, the chronically high inflation, the worsening economic conditions, and the unequal distribution of wealth have been the most influential issues that threaten the political stability of the country.

In the mass media field too, there have been some important structural changes. Since the 1980s the press companies in Turkey have grown to become one of its major industrial sectors. As a result, Turkish journalism which has a history of 170 years, has been transformed enormously. Nevertheless, the circulation problem has remained.

Contemporary studies and discussions on Turkish journalism draw attention to the fact that Babiali, the historic centre, physically and figuratively of Turkish journalism, has come to the threshold of a crisis. Media practitioners and professional journalists talk of declining journalist ethics. For almost two decades the growing public distrust of news media, scepticism of journalists' ethics, and a resentment of media power have become permanent features of the contemporary Turkish scene. In parallel to the changes in the press sector, the most important change in the broadcasting industry was the break up of the state monopoly. The public service broadcaster, TRT, which was long considered the official organ of the state, seemed to have lost the competition. Private television stations which imitated western, particularly American networks, introduced many new formats which earned them considerable popularity. Most of these channels are either affiliated to, or actually owned by large press companies. As a result, contrary to expectations in a much more liberalised atmosphere, in terms of freedom and democracy, media ownership is concentrated in the hands of a few powerful groups. All of these changes have had far reaching consequences in relation to the diversity and the quality of television journalism.

This thesis aims to examine how the current political, economic, and legal context in Turkey, as well as the professional, organisational, and ethical problems of Turkish journalism in general, influence television news broadcasting. One of the primary goals of this research is to evaluate the impact of recent changes in the broadcasting system on the content of television news, as well as the style and outlook of the news programmes. With this aim, television coverage of domestic economic and political issues, foreign news and popular news will be analysed. The thesis concentrates on television news for three main reasons. First, television news is the most symptomatic phenomenon which reflects the problems of Turkish journalism in the 1990s. Second, with the arrival of commercial channels, television's role as the main source of information has been reinforced. Third, despite the increasing importance of television news in Turkey, there are still very few, if any, comprehensive studies examining the changes in this field.

The study begins by introducing the main theoretical issues relating to journalism. This is followed by a review and discussion of historical, political, economic and social

factors that impinge on the present situation of journalism and the television broadcasting in Turkey. After this introductory section, news programmes of the major Turkish television channels are compared, to identify the impact of various factors affecting the content and the discourse of broadcast news. The main body of research also contains an examination of reality based programmes, and offers three case studies. This thesis employs various research methods such as interviews with journalists, participant observation in the newsrooms, content and textual analysis of news programmes and reality shows. In the same way the sources used, cover a wide range from academic literature and official documents to press cuttings. Due to the near absence of first hand sources on the present situation of broadcast journalism in Turkey, press cuttings have proved to be an invaluable resource to update the information about the constantly changing events.

Chapter one looks at the recent changes in media industries such as commercialisation, globalisation, and democratisation, with regard to the promises and pitfalls they pose for television journalism and society. It argues that although the privatisation, deregulation, and globalisation of television industries around the world, have promised progress, certain contradictory tendencies caused by commercialisation and lingering political and legal pressures, continue to endanger the democratisation and the liberalisation of the public sphere. This chapter also offers a description of the main focus of the research, and frames main research questions. It provides a critical discussion of the major theoretical approaches to news and journalism, and an assessment of their relative weaknesses and strengths in the specific case of Turkish television. Chapter one concludes with a discussion of relevant methodological issues, and an explanation of specific methods employed throughout the research.

Chapter two investigates the historical and current development of Turkish journalism. It points out that an examination of key events and turning points in the development of the press and broadcasting, provides a background to comprehend the present structural turbulence of journalism and the mass media, which has its roots in the 1980s. Chapter two contends that throughout its history Turkish news media have

suffered heavily from political and economic pressures which greatly restricted their ability to observe and criticise the state and powerful institutions like the Army. Examining the present political, social and economic context in Turkey, Chapter two argues that growing commercialisation, cross-ownership between major press and television companies, and concentration of the media in a few hands, exert new pressures on the news production and the work of journalists.

Chapter three attempts to examine the present legal, organisational and professional problems of journalists in Turkey. It argues that besides organisational factors, such as the level of autonomy and self-censorship, legal constraints over freedom of expression and of press in Turkey, operate as another level of control over journalists working for both public and private media. It reveals that the professional context of journalism in Turkey, has embodied some significant shortcomings such as lack of effective organisations and trade unions which make it vulnerable to political and organisational pressures. These shortcomings have also prevented the improvement of journalistic values and standards, thus adding to public scepticism and resentment of the media. Chapter three, finally argues that the inadequacy of training and academic education for journalists inhibits the development of the profession in Turkey.

Chapter four introduces a general overview of television news broadcasting in Turkey. It argues that behind the prevalence of television as a source of news and information in Turkey, there lies a number of social, cultural and economic factors such as the level of education and income, as well as the availability and penetration of different media. A large of part of Chapter four is devoted to analyses of the format, style, presentation and technical features of news programmes on major television channels. It asserts that the news programmes on private channels display certain features, such as a fast moving narrative, use of sophisticated computer technology, and more informal presentation modes, in order to attract the widest audiences possible. This makes the TRT newscasts seem even more uninteresting and outdated than ever.

Chapter five focuses on the coverage of domestic political, and economic news. Content analysis of the main evening newscasts, demonstrates that television news

reflects the power structure of society, by paying much more attention to government politics and political actors, than they do to opposition and pressure groups. The textual analysis of two important economic and political issues; Turkey's entry to the European Customs Union and demonstrations by civil servants reveal that the commercial, institutional, and ideological stance of the channels, determine the content of the news stories on important political and economic issues. It argues that although the ideological spectrum of the broadcast media has expanded in Turkey, television news does not always offer accurate and adequate information, and background for the audience to make decisions on important political and economic affairs.

Chapter six presents the overall picture, and the main tendencies of foreign news coverage on major television channels. The findings of the quantitative analysis confirms the results of earlier research that Turkish media rely, for most of its foreign news coverage, on international sources, and focus on the news which has some kind of national relevance. Two case studies on news stories about the civil wars in Chechnya and Bosnia reveal that even though television channels receive foreign news from major international news agencies, there are some differences among them in terms of content and presentation of the events. By noticing the differences between the public broadcaster TRT, and the private channels Chapter six argues that commercial television tends to appeal to popular feelings and beliefs, and that these clearly contradict official views and ideology. In doing so, they sometimes follow an openly populist and opportunist approach.

The growing tendency in the direction of tabloidisation and commercialisation of television news, forms the main concern of the last chapter, in which the main evening newscasts of Turkish television channels are compared with regard to the emphasis they place on human interest items, crime and tragedy news as well as news with a commercial content. Chapter seven argues that popular news stories are used as a device to soften news programmes, to attract and amuse the audience. This chapter also discusses the reasons behind the increasing ascendancy of some reality-based programmes in the schedules. It argues that these programmes have emotive and dramatic qualities as well as

some entertainment value which have been brought to the fore, particularly by private media as a way of increasing their audience ratings.

In the concluding part of the thesis, I will summarise the findings of the research, and draw some conclusions considering the various factors influencing the practices of journalists and television news production in Turkey.

CHAPTER 1: Study of Television News and Journalism

As we are preparing for the imminent arrival of the new millennium, television news which is an invention of the second half of the 20th century still constitutes the most dominant form of journalism. It is regarded by many people in different parts of the world as their primary source of information about national and international events. News has always been a distinctive generic feature of television, running in the front line of the schedules of major national networks as well as local channels. The 'visuality', 'actuality' and 'immediacy' of television news attract large numbers of people from all sectors of society on an everyday basis, giving the medium a unique position unlike that of the press and radio. For these qualities, television journalism is considered an indispensable element of the political process and public sphere in modern democratic societies. It is, therefore, expected to provide essential information on the political, social and economic issues which subsequently influence decisions and reactions of ordinary citizens towards public affairs. Beyond these vital political and social functions within national context, television also performs a crucial role in international affairs by purveying information and images about global events.

Despite its relatively short life span compared to its predecessors, newspapers and radio, the rapid spread of television has contributed immensely to the controversy over the social and political functions of journalism. The debates on the informational role of television seem to have been informed by the main ideological perspectives on society. The liberal approach has attributed to mass media a latent purpose of being part of a democratic, pluralistic system that should provide a market place of ideas as well as diversity of choices. News media and journalists, according to this view, should have a large degree of autonomy from the state, political parties and other interest groups.¹

¹. For a useful account on the pluralist and Marxist perspectives on the media see James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woolacott (eds), 'Mass Media and Society: General Perspectives' in J. Curran, M. Gurevitch, and J. Woollacott (eds), *Mass Communication and Society*, London: Edward Arnold, 1977, pp. 7-11; James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woollacott, 'The Study of the Media: Theoretical Approaches' in M. Gurevitch, T. Bennet, J. Curran and J. Woollacott (eds), *Culture, Society and Media*, London: Methuen, 1982, pp. 11-29.

Critical theory, however, has viewed news media as agents of a larger economic and ideological system controlled by the dominant classes in society. It has been argued that news is manufactured by journalists, who themselves are constrained by a number of organisational, ideological and economic limitations in their environment. Critical scholars, therefore, describe news as a 'dominant ideological definition of reality', a 'socially constructed reality', and a 'cultural artefact'.² Changes in the broadcasting industry since the 1980s have raised further theoretical and practical questions surrounding the nature and function of television news and the possible implications of these changes for democracy, society and culture.

During the course of this chapter, I will first examine the recent changes in television news broadcasting and the promises and pitfalls of the current trends in television journalism. This will be followed by a description of the main focus of the present research and an explanation of the reasons for undertaking a case study. I will also consider the main explanatory perspectives on news and journalism and their limitations and strengths with regard to the specific case of contemporary Turkish television in order to draw up the theoretical framework of the research. Finally I will explain the methodology which will be employed to investigate the main research questions raised by this study.

1.1. Changing Broadcasting Environment and Television Journalism

For more than a decade television systems around the world have been facing a number of challenges, which have been triggered off by a combination of new communication technologies and the changing political, economic and social conditions. The advent of satellite, cable, and more recently digital broadcasting technologies, has augmented the transmission capacity of television, abolishing the scarcity of airwaves, and expanding the national and cultural boundaries of terrestrial broadcasting. This has

². See Stanley Cohen and Jock Young, *The Manufacture of News*, London: Constable, 1973; Glasgow University Media Group, *Bad News*, London: Routledge & Keagan Paul, 1976; Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*, New York: Free Press, 1978

opened up new opportunities for private players to enter, or to expand their activities in the electronic media market, which led to dramatic changes in the ownership and control of broadcast media. The new satellite channels have not been as widespread as they were expected to be, but the ability of satellite broadcasting to connect remote territories into new viewing communities has so far remained unchallenged.

Technology, however, was not the single force behind the transformation of old broadcasting orders in many parts of the world. Since the 1980s the political economy of national and international affairs has changed too. The demise of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the decline of social welfare state in West European countries, the liberal economic policies of the 1980s, the globalisation and transnationalisation of world economy have had a major influence on national and international political, economic and social structures. The globalization, liberalization of trade, increased competition and the diminishing centrality of the state as a provider of goods and services have been the main features of the new world economic order, led by the USA.³ These developments together with technological advances have caused changes in the communication and culture industries.

Since the 1980s many governments, particularly in the western developed countries have attempted to privatise their broadcasting industries and to remove the kind of legislation that has come to be perceived as interventionist and restrictive. With the policies of deregulation and privatisation of broadcasting industries, governments aimed to strengthen the competitiveness and efficiency of their national audio-visual media. It has been argued that the expansion of television market would provide consumers greater choice and diversity of programming. By the 1990s the rapid privatisation of broadcasting across the globe, the resultant proliferation of television channels and the consequent increase in audiences and advertising revenues have dramatically altered the television landscape. The break-up of public service broadcasting systems, the growth of

³. See John Sinclair, Stuart Cunningham, and Elizabeth Jacka (eds), *New Patterns in Global Television-Peripheral Vision*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996 and Timothy M. Shaw, 'Beyond Any New World Order: the South in the 21st Century', in *Third World Quarterly*, 1994, 15(1):139-147.

commercial networks, and the fierce competition between television channels have become the realities of the newly emerging broadcasting ecology. The traditional public service broadcasting institutions had to adapt to these changes in order to survive in this highly competitive and fragmented mass media environment. The long-established commercial channels such as the ITV in Britain have also come under greater financial pressures than ever before.

These developments have had a profound impact on the nature of television news and the modes of its production and dissemination.⁴ In the following sections I will attempt to discuss the implications of the changes which have been transforming the broadcasting industries since the 1980s for television journalism.

1.1.1. The Commercialisation of Television News

The commercialisation of the news and the incorporation of certain entertainment elements into journalistic output have been perhaps the most visible consequence of the recent changes in the electronic media sphere. As has been the case for other genres television news too has started to accommodate its structures and operations to the imperatives of the market, subordinating to the commercial logic of audience ratings. Thus, the audience ratings which translate into advertising revenue have become one of the most important factors in determining the success and popularity of news and current affairs programmes. With an overriding concern to maximize their advertising share producers of factual programmes have often resorted to entertainment and human interest criteria as a means of attracting audiences. As a result, new hybrid formats which are generally labelled as 'infotainment' have emerged. With the increasing lighter elements in serious news programmes blurring the boundaries between information and entertainment the classical definition of news had to be reconsidered.

Another significant outcome of and the reason for the commercialisation of news with far reaching consequences for television journalism has been increased competition.

⁴. For the recent developments in journalism around the world, see *Journal of Communication*, 1992, 42 (3).

Ehrlich points out that the competitive norms and practices in television news serve corporate interests in several ways.⁵ First, the tendency towards trivial and superficial news coverage discourages in-depth and investigative reporting, critical of the economic and political establishment. Second, the 'competitive ethos' in television tends to "homogenize the news rather than diversify it".⁶ Third, the competition influences the way journalists and news teams operate. In the face of growing external and internal economic pressures journalists compete not only against other stations for higher ratings but also among themselves for better paid and more prestigious jobs in larger markets. As a result, television organisations in smaller markets benefit from a constant, ready supply of free or cheap labour.

Despite the divergent structural characteristics of the broadcasting systems and the countries in question the commercialisation of television news seem widely evident, though to varying degrees. Even countries with a long established public service broadcasting tradition could not be immune to the trends in television news gathering and production to maximise efficiency and reduce costs. In Britain, for example, the BBC, faced with strong political and commercial pressures restructured its factual programming in 1987 by bringing the management of television and radio journalism under a single News and Current Affairs Directorate. John Birt, the first head of the newly created Directorate and the current Director General, initiated a number of changes to the design and format of BBC news and current affairs programmes "in an effort to characterise - or 'brand' the BBC's output as more 'serious' than ITN's, while at the same time retaining its popularity and building audience share".⁷ As part of the reforms in news and current affairs the BBC also adopted in August 1991 a policy of 'bi-mediality' which encouraged correspondents to cover stories for use in both radio and television programmes. This policy was largely viewed by the BBC correspondents as a 'management conspiracy'

⁵Matthew C. Ehrlich, 'The Competitive Ethos in Television Newswork', *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 1995, 12 (2): 196-212.

⁶. *ibid.*

⁷. Brian McNair, *News and Journalism in the UK*, London: Routledge, 1994, p.85.

aimed to cut staff and costs.⁸ John Tusa, the former head of the BBC World Service and a prominent broadcaster was among those who were fiercely critical of the changes implemented by the BBC management.⁹ Tusa was concerned that the rigid management techniques were eroding the quality and the professionalism of BBC's news reporting which earned the corporation a worldwide reputation. Tusa wrote in 1997:

"Take the writing of news; any sense of understanding that a collective noun is followed by the singular not the obvious plural appears to have vanished into obscurity; mispronunciations abound. Correspondents in key overseas postings glaringly lack background knowledge or authority in the country they are supposed to be covering and have even been heard to say on air that this is their first visit to a country in their area. Reporters hector the camera or microphone because they lack producers to produce them into half way-decent broadcasting. The nadir of this trend was in Albania recently when a raft of BBC 'bi-medial' reporters, most with zero knowledge of the country or the issues, were more concerned with getting their faces on the evening Nine O'Clock News than in reporting the story."¹⁰

In the aftermath of the controversial franchise renewal in 1992 ITV, the commercial rival of the BBC, also came under intensified competitive pressures which had its bearing on the news and current affairs programming. Under the terms of 1991 Broadcasting Act ITN had no longer a guaranteed position as the sole provider of news to ITV companies which it enjoyed since 1954. Faced with the threat of losing its contracts to produce news for ITV and Channel Four to other commercial competitors ITN was forced "to deliver the regional companies with an affordable, high quality, but most of all *popular* news service."¹¹ In the early 1990s several ITV executives argued that scheduling current affairs programmes in the peak time was no longer commercially viable and they

⁸. The Guardian Media, May 11 1992.

⁹. John Tusa, 'Why the BBC's cries of pain must be heeded', The Daily Telegraph, June 15, 1994.

¹⁰. John Tusa, 'This is the BBC, Unfortunately', in *Guardian*, 14. 6.1997, p.25.

¹¹. Brian McNair, op. cit., p.93.

should be moved to less competitive slots.¹² Peter Ibbotson, then director of corporate affairs at Carlton TV argued that scheduling of current affairs in prime time have been forcing these programmes

"to pursue styles and subjects which will deliver audiences big enough to justify the traditional slots. The price is a further loss of definition. Accessible films about sperm doctors, steroids and monkey traders make good viewing, but what makes them current affairs? Are they so different from other topical feature programmes as to deserve special scheduling dispensation? Ironically, the strategy of tailoring content to audience appeal threatens to leave ratings as the only effective argument for the status quo."¹³

On the other side of the Atlantic, in the US, television journalism has also come to operate under greater market pressures and become more than ever a profit-making business of selling audiences to advertisers. 'The tabloidisation' of news, the growth of trash television, the increase in the number of reality shows and news magazines have emerged as the recent tendencies in American television journalism. Daniel Hallin points out that as a result of increased emphasis on audience ratings and budget cutbacks

"(t)he character of the evening news has already changed substantially. Its pace has come to resemble more closely the pace of the rest of commercial television, with 10-second soundbites and tightly packaged stories and more stories that 'tug at the heart strings'. And pressure is far greater today for the stories to have high 'production values', both narrative and visual: drama, emotion, and good video."¹⁴

Undoubtedly, the nature of news programming, and the very concept of news, change as a result of the extent to which media become reliant on advertising as a principal source of revenue, and popular programmes become fundamental to the construction of audiences. Following the chaotic transformation of Italian media system in the 1970s television news suddenly leaped into commercialism and sensationalism in the

¹². The Guardian 1 September 1992; 18 May 1992; 8 June 1992. For a useful debate on the political, financial and institutional pressures on British broadcast news see Chapter 5 in N. Miller and R. Allen (eds), *It's Live But Is It Real?*, University of Manchester Broadcasting Symposium, London: John Libbey, 1993, pp. 34-51.

¹³. The Guardian 20 July 1992.

¹⁴. Daniel. C. Hallin, *We Keep America on Top of the World*, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 177.

absence of "strong, consolidated, and consensually accepted principles" of journalism.¹⁵ In Latin America too the changing economic conditions, and the establishment of new economic links with, and forms of subordination to the United States brought about changes in the format and scheduling of news programmes in which international news agencies and satellite networks also played an important part. In Brazil, for instance, the high-rating television news broadcasts "are tailored to fit the usual working day".¹⁶ TV Globo squeezes its evening news between its most popular telenovelas with an increased time devoted to the human interest and crime stories.

Commercial considerations seemed to have gained priority even in countries where news programmes remain circumscribed by the state policy, and where the dominant interests try to maintain their position at least partly through control over the mass media and the dissemination of news. In China, in response to new economic and political priorities, there have been some shifts in the nature of news production and presentation that resemble the techniques used by Western commercial television to increase audience attention.¹⁷

1.1.2. The Globalisation of Television News

The arrival of satellite technology has extended the reach, and increased the speed of the global dissemination of television news. The launch of CNN (Cable News Network) in 1980 was a landmark in the history of broadcast journalism which revolutionized the production and distribution of international news.¹⁸ CNN, with its satellite-fed technology and real-time reportage has had a remarkable success in

¹⁵. Paolo Mancini, 'Old and New Contradictions in Italian Journalism', *Journal of Communication*, 1992, 42(3): 42-47.

¹⁶. Conrad Philip Kottak, *Prime-Time Society: An Anthropological Analysis of Television and Culture*, Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth, 1990, p.90.

¹⁷. Deanna Campbell Robinson, 'Changing Functions of Mass Media in the People's Republic of China', *Journal of Communication*, 1988, 31 (4): 58-73.

¹⁸. See Lewis A. Friedland, *Covering The World: International Television News Services*, USA: Twentieth Century Fund, Inc., 1992.

delivering the moving images of wars, famines, disasters and human sufferings into the living rooms of ordinary people across the globe. Since the 1980s a number of international events and crises, such as the famine in Africa, the demolition of Berlin Wall, the overthrow of socialist regimes in the former Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union, pro-democracy movements in Tienanmen Square, the Gulf war and the civil wars in Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda were but few of the dramatic events which reaffirmed the power of CNN. The success of CNN has encouraged other entrepreneurs to invest in this profitable and prestigious market and to enter the global news competition. As the advances in communication technologies have lifted the barriers for entry into broadcasting and have reduced the production and delivery costs of television news the number of satellite news channels, international news film suppliers, national, regional and local television channels has increased enormously. As a result, international television news has become a growing and profitable business. Gurevitch points out that with the globalization of television there emerged three major groups of players in the present structure of the international distribution and exchange of the television news.¹⁹ The first group of news suppliers are the international news agencies such as WTN (Worldwide Television Network), Visnews and APTV (Associated Press Television), subsidiaries of the transnational news agencies UPITN (United Press International Television Network), Reuters and Associated Press, and also CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System) Newsfilm. They provide the regional news exchange systems with raw news film footage from around the world, and are, therefore, essential to the functioning of the news exchange systems. The international satellite delivered news services, such as the US based CNN and the British-based Super Channel, Sky News and the BBC's World Service constitute the second arm of the new world information order. They offer complete television news programmes via satellite to many countries around the world. Third is the regional television news exchange systems such as EBU (European Broadcasting Union), ABU (Asian Broadcasting Union), ASBU (Arab States

¹⁹. Michael Gurevitch, 'The Globalization of Electronic Journalism' in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (eds), *Mass Media and Society*, London: Edward Arnold, 1991., pp. 178-193.

Broadcasting Union), and Intervision, serving the East European countries. In addition, the US commercial television networks are still among the major suppliers of television news.

The expansion of international Western satellite and cable television services to many parts of the developing world and their perceived capacity to subvert cultural sovereignty has reopened some of the key arguments of the 1970s on the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). The 'free flow of information', which the West insisted on at the time of NWICO debates, was perceived as a one-way traffic in news and information from information-rich Northern centres to information-poor Southern peripheries.²⁰ Some critics argued that the proliferation of international news channels has not redressed the imbalance inherent in international news and information flow. Today, despite the efforts of some regional agencies and global networks, such as Televisa of Mexico which covers Latin America with its Spanish language service the major television news suppliers are still of American and Western European origin. In India, the dependence of television channels on transnational, mainly Anglo-American television news agencies such as WTN and Reuters Television has continued even after the privatisation of the broadcasting system. Similarly, the privatisation of Kenyan television by the creation of a new television channel Kenya Television Network and, through the restructuring of the state-run Voice of Kenya as Kenya Broadcasting Corporation has not eliminated the dependency on western news agencies. In many developing countries commercial television channels too derive most of their news from the US. Critiques argue that this trend in the Third World television "runs counter to recommendations [of the MacBride Commission] for the development of non-commercial forms of communication, as well as ... democratised, decentralised, and diversified communications".²¹

²⁰. For an update on the issues surrounding the NWICO debate see Peter Golding and Phil Harris (eds.) *Beyond Cultural Imperialism- Globalisation, Communication and the New International Order*, London: Sage, 1997.

²¹. Geoffrey Reeves, *Communications and the 'Third World'*, London: Routledge, 1993, pp. 77-78.

While NWICO may have been consigned to history, developments in communications in recent years have increased the rate of news and information flow tremendously. Today, the transnational information and media organisations based mainly in the North have come to dominate the news media worldwide, with an as yet unmeasurable impact on local cultures and media. Keval Kumar argues that the images transmitted by the Western media "are those of political, economic and cultural interest to the transnational agencies".²² It can be argued that Kumar's concerns are justified, given the power, reach and the influence of Western television to set the global news agenda to reflect Western geostrategic interests. We have seen, most recently and brazenly in the case of the Gulf war in 1991, how much Western media contributed to the war effort by uncritically following Washington's agenda in the post-cold war Middle East.²³

However, the concept of one-way flow has been challenged by a number of studies on global television. One such study has argued that "the world divided into a number of regions each of which have their own internal dynamics as well as their global ties".²⁴ Another research has shown that "the globalisation of television news has not diminished the uniquely national character of news programmes in different countries. ...Television news maintains both global and culturally specific orientations... This is accomplished, first by casting far-away events in frameworks that render these events comprehensible, appealing and 'relevant' to domestic audiences; and second by constructing the meanings of these events in ways that are compatible with the 'dominant ideology' of the societies they serve".²⁵

²². Keval Kumar, 'International News on Indian Television', in David French and Michael Richards (eds.) *Contemporary Television- Eastern Perspectives*, New Delhi: Sage, 1996, p.281.

²³. See Martin Shaw, *Civil Society and Media in Global Crises*, London: Pinter, 1996.

²⁴. John Sinclair, Stuart Cunningham, and Elizabeth Jacka (eds), *New Patterns in Global Television-Peripheral Vision*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

²⁵. Michael Gurevitch, Mark R. Levy and Itzhak Roeh, 'The Global Newsroom: Convergences and Diversities in the Globalization of Television News' in Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks, *Communication and Citizenship*, London: Routledge, 1991, pp. 196-216.

1.1.3. The Democratisation of Public Sphere and Television Journalism

It has been argued that the expansion in the national television markets as a result of privatisation and deregulation policies and the dramatic increase in the penetration capacity of international networks have contributed to the process of democratisation by reducing the opportunities for governments to censor or repress information. It is believed that in many Third World countries both national and international television have played a crucial part in the restoration of democratic regimes following the years of repression under military governments.²⁶ In the same way people living in countries with heavily censored national media learned through satellite television of democratising trends elsewhere, and in their own countries. For instance, Albanians watched the pro-democracy movements and the collapse of socialist regimes in Eastern European countries through the broadcasts of Yugoslav and Italian channels.²⁷ In Turkey many people heard from CNN that the Turkish government had allowed American planes which bombed Northern Iraq during the Gulf War to take off from Incirlik, a NATO base in South Anatolia.²⁸ In 1990 in Cote d'Ivoire, the national broadcast channels failed to report the student demonstrations in favour of democratisation. People followed the events from foreign media, especially the BBC.²⁹

The democratising and liberalising potential of the privatisation and deregulation of television broadcasting was not confined to less democratic countries. It was argued that even in the developed western democracies new legal arrangements relaxing the constraints on the ownership, production and the distribution of television contributed to the democratisation of public sphere by allowing new players to enter the field and by

²⁶. See Elizabeth Fox (ed), *Media and Politics in Latin America*, London: Sage, 1988, Vicky Rendal, 'The Media and Democratisation in The Third World', *Third World Quarterly*, 1993, 14 (3): 625-646, and Fernando Reyes-Matta, 'Journalism in Latin America in the '90s: The Challenges of Modernization', *Journal of Communication*, 1992, 42(3): 74-84.

²⁷. Jane Kokan, 'Albania: Sex, Lies and Foreign Video', *Index of Censorship*, 21(10), 1992, p. 3.

²⁸. Hülya Yengin, *Ekranın Büyüsü (The Magic of the Screen)*, Istanbul: Der Publications, 1994, p.133.

²⁹. Kabral Blay-Amihere, 'Cote D'Ivoire- An Old Man's Party is Nearly Over', *Index on Censorship*, 19(8), 1990, pp. 26-27.

increasing the freedom of choice for the consumer. It was also argued that with the emergence of private channels, broadcast journalists have had the opportunity to work in a more relaxed and less regulated environment than that of the public service broadcasting organisations. In France, for instance, the adoption of the principle of freedom of communication in 1982 and the privatisation of the broadcasting system provided greater freedoms for television journalism.³⁰ The American broadcasting system, which has been dominated by three commercial networks and a public service channel has been transformed by "the loosening government regulation, the increasing absorption of television industry into international conglomerates, and the rise of satellite links and cable stations".³¹ These developments led to the professionalization of journalists which, Hallin considers a positive development in terms of the democratisation of the public sphere.³²

On the other hand, the increasing commercialisation of the television industry, it was argued, might also lead to fragmentation and decline of the public sphere, and, thus, threaten the healthy functioning of democracy.³³ The idea that the increasing number of channels would bring more diversity and choice to the consumer was considered to be illusory since the mass media market came to be dominated by a handful of media giants who had considerable power and capital at their disposal. The privatisation and deregulation policies of the national governments and the commercialisation of the television industry have contributed to the development of dominant television companies, which are owned by "an unrepresentative capitalist elite, symbolised by Murdoch and Berlusconi".³⁴ Some argued that the recent transformation of television

³⁰. See Dominique Walton, 'Journalists: the Tarpeian Rock is Close to the Capitol', *Journal of Communication*, 1992, 42 (3): 26-41, and 'Values and Normative Choices in French Television' in Jay G. Blumler (ed.) *Television and the Public Interest*, London: Sage, 1992, pp. 147-160, and also Raymond Kuhn, *The Media in France*, London: Routledge, 1995.

³¹. Peter Dahlgren, *Television and the Public Sphere*, London: Sage, 1995, p.49.

³². Daniel C. Hallin, op.cit., 1994.

³³. Peter Dahlgren, op. cit., pp.1-24.

³⁴. James Curran, 'Rethinking the Media as a Public Sphere' in Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks (eds.) *Communication and Citizenship*, London: Routledge, 1991, pp. 28-57.

broadcasting has largely failed to liberalise the public sphere since the links of media conglomerates with the state and powerful economic interests have become closer. Hallin draws our attention to the situation that journalists have become increasingly involved with economic institutions and with the state, and "often wind up moving erratically and irresponsibly among a number of positions that are highly damaging to the process of political debate."³⁵

The democratisation of public sphere and television journalism have seemed to be further questionable in developing countries where despite the increasing number of new outlets and the privatisation of broadcast media the restrictions on the freedom of the press and expression have largely remained. It was reported by the International Press Institution (IPI) in 1990 that in Latin America and Africa, even after the establishment of parliamentary democracies, journalists are still under serious danger posed by the government, the drug trade, and, in some countries, civil wars.³⁶ In his analysis of the broadcasting deregulation and privatisation in developing Asian countries, Karthigesu points out that the news coverage of Malaysian private channel TV3 "has remained subdued, faithful to government wishes and non-challenging to government sensitivities".³⁷ In India, following privatisation and commercialisation of broadcasting system the Gandhi administration introduced a new bill in 1990 which proposed greater autonomy for the broadcasters. However, this bill could not prevent electronic media from being used for party propaganda purposes.³⁸ Despite privatisation and the liberalisation of information channels in India, Pakistan, Singapore and Malaysia the authoritarian and

³⁵. Daniel C. Hallin, op. cit., p. 7.

³⁶. Fernando Reyes-Matta, 'Journalism in Latin America in the '90s: The Challenges of Modernization', *Journal of Communication*, 1992, Vol: 42(3): 74-84.

³⁷. Ranggasamy Karthigesu, 'Broadcasting Deregulation in Developing Asian Countries: an Examination of nascent Tendencies Using Malaysia as a Case Study', *Media, Culture and Society*, 1994, 16: 73-90.

³⁸. Geoffrey Reeves, *Communications and the 'Third World'*, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 87.

bureaucratic attitudes of the governments towards politics and current affairs on television have remained firm and restrictive.³⁹

To sum up although the privatisation, deregulation and globalisation of the television industry in recent decades have promised certain improvements, the democratisation and the liberalisation of the public sphere have seemed to be hindered by some contradictory trends caused largely by commercialisation and lingering political and legal pressures.

1.2. The Context and Theoretical Framework of the Study

The broadcast media in Turkey too were swept by the powerful winds of technological change and globalisation. In the early 1990s with the arrival of satellite delivered private channels the Turkish television system has been subject to a dramatic shake up at national as well as regional and local levels. The most important consequence of this shake up has been the rise of commercial television against the decline of public service broadcasting. A recent study on the crisis of public service broadcasting in Turkey points out that Turkish Radio Television Corporation (TRT), the Turkish public broadcaster, could not resist the changes in the broadcasting industry due to immense political and legal pressures on its programme and personnel policies, decreasing audience and advertising figures and the lack of support from the public and the intellectuals.⁴⁰ The commercial broadcasting organisations, therefore, have become a significant social force in influencing public assumptions, attitudes and mood on various domestic and foreign issues. However, the rise of commercial television in Turkey has had some paradoxical political, economic and cultural consequences. First, with the enormous expansion of news and current affairs programmes the Turkish audience has been exposed to more news and current affairs programmes than ever before. That the different political views

³⁹. See Sevanti Ninan, 'Transforming Television in India', in Everette E. Dennis and Robert W. Snyder (eds) *Media and Democracy*, New Brunswick (USA): Transaction Publishers, 1998, pp. 43-49, and R. Karthigesu, op. cit., pp. 73-90.

⁴⁰. Dilruba Catalbas, *The Crisis of Public Service Broadcasting: Turkish Television in the 1990s*, Unpublished PhD thesis, The University of London, 1996.

began to appear on television has been considered as a positive step for the betterment of democracy. It has been argued that the ideological framework of television has been freed from the limitations of the official rhetoric of TRT. Second, local channels have emerged, enabling people in local and regional communities to articulate their needs, which was not possible during the era of TRT monopoly. On the other hand, there have been some important pitfalls as well. The most important of these is the growing concentration and monopolisation in the media sector. The media conglomerates have acquired considerable economic and political power, which can be used to further their economic interests and to negotiate certain privileges with the politicians. This unwarranted growth of media power has been found threatening for the healthy formation of public opinion. Some have argued that private channels give priority to commercial interests over the public interest. They have been also accused of distorting and exaggerating news, violating private lives and influencing the course of justice. Moreover despite the increase in the number of television channels their ideological positions have continued to represent a bias towards left. The majority of private television stations belong to secular-liberal free market camp while few have nationalist-Islamist leanings.

The transformation of broadcasting in Turkey at the beginning of the 1990s has provided an interesting and instructive case of the complex relationships between television journalism, technological change, politics and market forces. This thesis concentrates on Turkish news media and journalism with special reference to television news in the 1990s. Its aims are two-fold. The first is to explore the impact of political, economic and social changes since the 1980s as well as the legal, professional, organisational and ethical problems of journalism on the content, style and outlook of television news. The second is to investigate how Turkish television represented the prevailing national and international political, economic social and cultural issues and events. The research offered in this thesis is, therefore, both a social and historical inquiry of how the wider political, economic and social factors influence the current practices of journalism and news production and a comparative qualitative and quantitative content

analysis of television news programmes which aims to demonstrate and explain the similarities and differences between television channels.

The first and the most important reason for studying Turkish news media is that Turkey offers an intriguing variety of traditions and philosophies. She is just at the centre of various contesting traditions, cultures and civilisations: secular versus fundamentalist, liberal versus conservative, modern versus traditional, oriental versus occidental, and industrial versus agrarian. Therefore, as a case study it allows us to understand not only the complexities and the conditions in which national mass media operate but also to identify the varying characteristics of news and journalism in specific socio-cultural contexts at a particular time. The second reason for taking Turkish broadcasting as a case study is that it has so far remained one of the least written about and researched areas in academic literature. Little has been said about the impact of political, economic and social changes on Turkish television news and journalism, and almost nothing about how Turkish television news represented important national and international political and economic events.

1.2.1. The Theoretical Framework of the Study

Recently the proliferation of broadcast channels and the growing importance of television news have intensified the debates on the production of news and the role of journalism in modern democratic societies. A large number of inquiries in the mass media field has dealt with news media, its message and the social, political and economic contexts in which those messages are produced. The political economy of media institutions, institutional structures and role relationships, professional ideologies and work practices and interaction of media institutions with the socio-political environment have been the major strands of interest in the news research. The result is a substantial volume of academic literature which purports to explain the factors that influence news content and journalistic practices.

There have been three contemporary theoretical approaches to journalism and news production research. First there is the political economy approach that relates the

outcome of the news production process to the economic structure of the media organization. The second is that of mainstream sociology, the sociology of occupations and organizations that takes the journalists' professed autonomy and decision-making power as its central problem and tries to understand how journalists' efforts on the job are constrained by organisational and occupational routines. The last one is the culturalist interpretation of news media that emphasizes the constraining force of broad cultural symbol systems regardless of the details of organisational and occupational routines.

The political economy approach in media research emerged as a response to earlier media effects studies which had concentrated on the individual. Political economists argued that the significance of media went much further than questions of individual effects, uses and gratifications and had to do with the relationship of media to other social institutions, to the economy and to the formation of ideologies. Thus, it has a broadly 'critical' signification, often associated with macro-questions. In this view, the media are seen not as an autonomous organisational system, but as a set of institutions closely linked to the dominant power structure through ownership, legal regulation, the values implicit in the professional ideologies in the media, and the ideological consequences of prevailing modes of newsgathering.⁴¹ The political economy approach focuses on how the making and taking of meaning is formed at every level by the structured asymmetries in social relations. These include, for instance, the way news is structured by the prevailing relations between owners and editors or journalists and their sources. What is crucial for political economists dealing with these issues is to show "how particular micro contexts are shaped by general economic dynamics and the wider structures they sustain".⁴²

Political economists argue that the news media in modern capitalist societies which operate as large industrial and commercial organizations, closely tied to the other segments of the economy not only inform and entertain people but also disseminate ideas

⁴¹. Graham Murdock and Peter Golding, 'For a Political Economy of Mass Communications', in Ralph Miliband and John Saville (eds.), *Socialist Register*, 1973, pp. 205-233.

⁴². Peter Golding and Graham Murdock, 'Culture, Communications, and Political Economy,' in J. Curran and M. Gurevitch (eds), *Mass Media and Society*, London: Edward Arnold, 1991, pp.15-32.

about the dominant political and economic structures. Thus, mass media in a capitalist system are used by the ruling class, which holds the material production as one of the means of control over the cultural production. This argument is mainly derived from the writings of Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology*. In one of their well-known statements Marx and Engels argued that:

"The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it".⁴³

The political economic inquiries into the media are divided into two main strands. While the instrumentalists concentrate on "the way in which capitalists use communication corporations as instruments to further their interests and consolidate their power and privilege", structuralists emphasize "the structure of the capitalist economy and its underlying dynamics".⁴⁴ Instrumentalists argue that since media products are provided by capitalists, they are intended to defend the capitalist system and to prevent the formation of class consciousness among the working classes. Graham Murdock finds fundamental problems in this version of instrumentalism since it assumes that the ideological interests of the capitalist class are intentionally reflected in cultural products. Golding and Murdock together assert that:

"the relationship between the material interests controlling the media and the cultural products they provide is a complex one, not explicable in terms of conspiracy or conscious intent. The part played by the media in cementing the consensus in capitalist society is only occasionally characterised by overt suppression or deliberate distortion".⁴⁵

⁴³. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1965, p. 61.

⁴⁴. Graham Murdock, 'Large Corporations and the Control of Communications Industries', in M. Gurevitch, T. Bennett, J. Curran and J. Woollacott (eds), *Culture, Society and Media*, London: Methuen, 1982, pp. 125-127.

⁴⁵. Graham Murdock and Peter Golding, 'For a Political Economy of Mass Communications', in Ralph Miliband and John Saville (eds.), *Socialist Register*, 1973, pp. 205-233.

The structuralist version of the political economy, on the other hand, requires the investigation of how the general dynamics of media industries and capitalist economies limit the policies and operations of the media. The mass media are seen as one of the means of legitimising the power relations in an inegalitarian society. In order to be able to understand how the media are legitimising the 'status quo', they argue, 'routines of practice in media industries' must be examined.

Even though structuralists accept that economics is obviously not the only determining factor, it is ultimately the most powerful one of many factors operating in cultural production. Murdock and Golding argue that, news, as one of the forms of media messages, is also subject to economic pressures and determination. As a result of the pressures created by the needs of news production, limitations of cost and other resources and concern for audiences, news is produced in such a fashion:

"in which the world is portrayed as fragmented and unchanging and in which dissent and opposition appear as ephemeral, peripheral, or irrational. News becomes palliative and comforting, intentionally undisturbing, and unthreatening, focusing on institutions of consensus maintenance and handling the social order".⁴⁶

Another important consequence of economic pressures bringing about competition for audience ratings is that television news become an entertainment commodity. Murdock labels media products as 'peculiar' commodities with two dimensions; cultural and economic. Media messages which would serve to shape the social consciousness of individuals are also like any other commodity which can be sold and are subject to market conditions. Therefore, political economists believe that "the crux of the system is that information is a commodity to be packaged, distributed, and sold in whatever guise and context guarantee commercial survival".⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Graham Murdock and Peter Golding, 'Capitalism, Communication and Class Relations,' in J. Curran, M. Gurevitch and J. Woolacott (eds), *Mass Communication and Society*, London: Edward Arnold, 1977, pp.12-43.

⁴⁷ *ibid.* pp.205-233.

Political economy theory is concerned also with the international media system as a "mechanism by which developing countries are brought within the common cultural hegemony of western capitalism".⁴⁸ Elliott and Golding argue that the growth of the international media systems "enables the news media to play broadly the same ideological role at an international level as is already apparent nationally in particular developed countries".⁴⁹

For political economists Western domination of the international flow of media products ranging from television dramas to news forms an important dimension of what is seen as 'cultural imperialism' or 'cultural offensive'. Murdock and Golding examined how transnational conglomerates controlled "the production and the distribution of ideas of their age."⁵⁰ Similarly, Herbert Schiller applied political economy theory to international communication and to broader issues of dominance and dependency, tied aid, super-power conflict, and media commercialization. In his view cultural imperialism describes "the sum of processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even to promote the values and structures of the dominant center of the system."⁵¹ Schiller contends that the US mass media serve to reinforce American control over the world communications system by creating a global consumer society and by promoting the concept of the good life at home and abroad. Thus, Schiller sees communication imperialism as a conscious and organised effort, taken by the US military-communication conglomerates to maintain commercial, political and military superiority.⁵²

⁴⁸. Philip Elliott and Peter Golding, 'Mass Communication and Social Change: The Imagery of Development and The Development of Imagery', in Emmanuel de Kadt and Gawin Williams (eds.), *Sociology and Development*, London: Tavistock, 1974, p. 230.

⁴⁹. *ibid.*, p. 230.

⁵⁰. Graham Murdock and Peter Golding, 'Capitalism, Communication and Class Relations', in J. Curran, M. Gurevitch and J. Woolacott (eds), *Mass Communication and Society*, London: Edward Arnold, 1977, p.28

⁵¹. Herbert I. Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination*, New York: International Arts and Science Press, 1976, p. 9.

⁵². Herber I. Schiller, *Mass Communication and American Empire*, New York: Augustus M. Kelly, 1969.

One other important strand in the political economy approach is the 'propaganda model' which suggests that 'social purpose' of the media is to inculcate and defend the economic, social and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the society and the state. This purpose is served by the media "through the selection of topics, distributing concerns, framing the issues, filtering of information, emphasis and tone, and by keeping debate within the bounds of acceptable premises".⁵³ Studying the American media in the 1980s Chomsky and Herman have pointed out that the propaganda model "traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalise dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages to the public."⁵⁴ According to this perspective, there are five "filters" which "interact with and reinforce one another". The first one is the size, concentrated ownership, wealth of owners and profit orientation of the dominant mass media firms. The second filter is advertising which provides the major source of revenue for the media. The third is the dependency of the media on information provided by government, business, and experts funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power. While the fourth is the 'flak' which is used as a means of disciplining the media the final one is the ideology of 'anti-communism' as a national religion and control mechanism. The raw material of news must pass through successive filters, leaving only the cleaned residue fit to print. Chomsky and Herman argue that these filters "fix the premises of discourse and interpretation, and operations of what amounts to propaganda campaigns."⁵⁵ They also point out that one of the major parts of the propaganda model is sourcing the news. These sources which are connected to powerful groups may have been provided by public relation offices or experts. In terms of experts, they believe that bias may be structured, and simply skewed in the direction desired by the government and the market. Douglas

⁵³ E. S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1988, p.2.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.2.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 2.

Kellner criticizes the propaganda model on the basis that it does not offer a comprehensive theory of capitalist society. Kellner prefers the concept of 'hegemony' to the notion of propaganda as it "has the connotation, more appropriate to television, of induced consent, of a more subtle process of incorporating individuals into patterns of belief and behavior".⁵⁶

The political economy approach is perhaps the most sophisticated and self-critical form in British media studies. However, it has been argued that both the weaknesses and the strength of this theory result from its focus on the 'big picture' rather than 'fine grained questions'.⁵⁷ The relative absence of research in this tradition on the response of audience to media content was one of the main criticisms made towards it.⁵⁸ However, this problem has shaped the course of the political economy approach into the 1980s and the 1990s. Scholars in the political economy tradition appeared to have put heavy emphasis on the individualist values of journalists, ideological influences and source availability rather than on the ownership in accounting important issues, such as the coverage of the welfare state in the 1980s and the reporting of the 1981 race riots.⁵⁹ Moreover, current writings in this tradition seem to show greater awareness of the need to demonstrate how the political economic formation of the media is related to media content, and to the discourses of public debate and private consciousness.⁶⁰

The micro-aspects of the interaction of media institutions and occupations with the socio-political environment, which are left unexplored by political economy analysis have been the major area of interest for the organisational approach. The analysis of the

⁵⁶. Douglas Kellner, *Television and the Crisis of Democracy*, London: Westview Press, 1990, p. 20.

⁵⁷. Michael Schudson, 'The Sociology of News Revisited', in J. Curran and M. Gurevitch (eds), *Mass Media and Society*, London: Edward Arnold, 1991, pp. 141-159.

⁵⁸. Oliver Boyd-Barrett, 'The Political Economy Approach', in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Chris Newbold (eds), *Media Studies: A Reader*, 1995, pp. 186-192.

⁵⁹. See Peter Golding and Sue Middleton, *Images of Welfare*, Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1982; Graham Murdock, 'Reporting the Riots', in J. Benyon (ed.), *Scarman and After*, 1984, Oxford: Pergamon, pp. 73-95.

⁶⁰. Peter Golding and Graham Murdock, 'Culture, Communications, and Political Economy' in J. Curran and M. Gurevitch (eds), *Mass Media and Society*, London: Edward Arnold, 1991, pp. 15-32.

structures and practices of media organisations and occupations aim to find answers to the questions of how and by whom the power is wielded. These studies have contributed to our knowledge of the way particular media and types of cultural production are organized and of the roles and functions of those who work within them. Most of these studies have dealt with journalism as a distinct form of media message production and derived their conclusions from participant observations in the newsrooms or television studios, and interviews with media professionals.

In *News from Nowhere*, one of the pioneering studies in organisational approach, Edward Jay Epstein examined the impact of organisational, economic and technical requirements on news production in the American NBC television network between 1968 and 1969. He found the technical constraints of television news particularly notable. Epstein's study also showed how network journalists worked within the contours of organizational supervision and control, and, therefore, developed a self-censorship mechanism.⁶¹ In *Journalists at Work* Jeremy Tunstall argued that most specialist correspondents in national news organisations in Britain had a significant degree of freedom from editorial control because of their knowledge, reputation and network contacts. However, James Curran pointed out that the conclusions of this study cannot be generalised since it dealt with an "atypical minority group" of journalists, and also was conducted "before the new generation of interventionist proprietors".⁶² Elliott and Golding's study, *Making the News*, comparing news production in Irish, Swedish and Nigerian broadcasting organisations argued that in stages of planning, gathering, selection and presentation news was moulded by the 'exigencies of organisational production'. The authors concluded that broadcast journalism was a highly regulated and routine process of manufacturing a cultural product on an electronic production line.⁶³ Their study located news within its broader institutional context and focused particularly on the struggle of

⁶¹. Jay Edward Epstein, *News From Nowhere*, New York: Random House, 1973.

⁶². James Curran, 'Culturalist Perspectives of News Organizations: A Reappraisal and A Case Study' in M. Ferguson (ed), *Public Communication: The New Directions*, London, Sage, 1990, pp.114-134.

⁶³. Philip Elliott and Peter Golding, *Making the News*, London: Longman, 1979.

news departments against other claimants within media organisations for scarce resources. These examples can be increased to cover a wider range of institutions and areas. For instance, Philip Schlesinger's penetrating study of the BBC's news, *Putting Reality Together* is again one of the most well known of its kind and provides a critical approach to the concept of 'autonomy' of broadcasters.⁶⁴

The culturalist perspective combines the elements of both political economy and organisational approaches, but also borrows some aspects of the liberal pluralist model of the mass media. Like the political economists culturalists also assign mass media an ideological power. However, the point where culturalists interpretations differ from the classical Marxist and political economy approach is that they attribute a greater degree of independence to ideology from the economic base. The culturalists approach is mainly concerned with the way in which mass media operate ideologically, to sustain and support prevailing relations of domination. The tendency of the modern media as Stuart Hall argues, is "to reproduce the ideological field of a society in such a way as to reproduce, also its structure of domination".⁶⁵ Hall describes the ideological functions of the mass media which are performed "within the discourse of dominant ideologies" as to construct "*social knowledge*" and "*social imagery*"; "to reflect and *reflect on* the plurality" of the society in which it operates; "to organise, orchestrate and *bring together* that which it has selectively represented and selectively classified".⁶⁶

The studies carried out in the culturalist tradition offer an analysis of how the cultural industries work. They do not subscribe to the view that the ruling classes in a liberal democratic society exert a direct influence on the mass media. Hall, Connell and Curti argue that the journalists' thinking is shaped by the patterns of dominant culture and power relationships outside the media rather than by direct controls exercised within media organisations. They demonstrate 'the relative autonomy' of television in the context

⁶⁴. Philip Schlesinger, *Putting Reality Together: BBC News*, London: Constable, 1978.

⁶⁵. Stuart Hall, 'Culture, The Media and The Ideological Effect', in J.Curran, M.Gurevitch and J.Woolacott (eds), *Mass Communication and Society*, London: Edward Arnold, 1977, pp.315-48.

⁶⁶. *ibid* ., pp.315-48. (italics are the author's)

of British General Elections in 1974. In their analysis of 'contents' and 'forms' of 'Election Panorama' on the BBC they conclude that:

"the media *accurately* reflect and represent the prevailing structure and mode of power. It is in politics and the State, not in the media, that power is *skewed*...Media neutrality and independence are therefore quite 'real' in the sense that their function is essentially to try to *hold the ring*, to sustain an arena of 'relative independence', in order that this *reproduction of the conditions of political, power can take place*."⁶⁷

The culturalists also investigate the ways in which meaning in a particular media text or across a range of texts is constructed. They argue that the ideological power of media results from the decoding of media messages by the audience within the 'hegemonic framework' which is encoded in these texts by communicators. This notion of ideology as hegemonic derives principally from the work of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci who argued that ideology is not simply dominant, it is hegemonic, which is to say that the concept allows for the dimension of struggle and opposition, of confrontation between different cultures where hegemony has to be negotiated and won.⁶⁸ Hall, Connell and Curti together assert that there is more than one meaning in messages available through television. Among them "one is preferred and offered to the viewers, over the others, as the most appropriate". What audiences infer from the media content is argued to be hidden in the text itself. As Carey puts it, the text is "a sequence of symbols-speech, writing, gesture- that contains interpretations".⁶⁹ What is required then to interpret the interpretations.

The culturalist view identifies the symbolic determinants of news in the relations between 'facts' and symbols. Stuart Hall in his influential article on *The Determinations of*

⁶⁷. Stuart Hall, Ian Connell and Linda Curti, 'The 'Unity' of Current Affairs Television', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, No: 9, Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1976, p.90. (italics are the authors')

⁶⁸. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971.

⁶⁹. James Carey, 'Mass Communication Research and Cultural Studies': An American View' in , J. Curran, M. Gurevitch and J. Woolacott (eds.) *Mass Communication and Society*, London: Edward Arnold, 1977, pp.409-425.

News Photographs argues that in order to examine how the ideology of news operates, we need to see formal news values as "an ideological structure" which appear as "a set of neutral, routine practises".⁷⁰ Another example of the application of culturalist view to news and journalism is presented in Hall *et. al.*'s *Policing the Crisis*. This study argues that the media played an active role in defining and developing 'moral panics', and amplifying deviance by examining the press coverage of the 'mugging' scare of the early 1970s in Britain. The authors identify three important aspects of the social production of news. The first is the bureaucratic and organisational factors that can be found in the routine practices of the news production, such as the division of the work force. The second is the structure of news values which play an important role in the professional socialisation, practice and ideology of journalists. The last is the 'construction' of the news story which involves the presentation of the news to its 'assumed' audience by means of 'identification' and 'contextualization'.⁷¹ These processes, they argue, embody an important assumption on behalf of the journalists that society has a 'consensual' nature. News is regularly interpreted within frameworks which already exist in this conception of 'consensus'.⁷² The news media intend to provide the public with the definitions of those who have privileged access to the media as 'accredited sources'. These are the 'primary definers' which then become 'secondary definers' when their views are taken on and circulated by the journalists.⁷³

Another important argument of the culturalist approach is that journalism is something part of, rather than separate from, popular culture. Cultural patterns of society exert influences on the images and meanings used by journalists. Mass media are regarded

⁷⁰. Stuart Hall, 'The Determinations of NewsPhotographs', in S. Cohen and J. Young (eds), *The Manufacture of News*, London: Constable, 1973, revised edition, pp. 226-243.

⁷¹. Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts, *Policing the Crisis*, London: Macmillan, 1978.

⁷². Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts, *Policing the Crisis*, London: Macmillan, 1978.

⁷³. Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts, *Policing the Crisis*, London: Macmillan, 1978.

as an important feature of popular culture while television news and the press are undeniably 'popular' features of the mass media. Therefore, culturalist studies also focus on the ways in which non-fiction media output functions within- and as -popular culture.

Scholars working within the culturalist approach "start by analysing the form and content of cultural artifacts and then working backwards to describe their base".⁷⁴ Therefore, they have been criticised by the political economists for ignoring the fact that the examination of the general economic context is, in fact, a prerequisite to understand the processes and outcomes of cultural production.⁷⁵ Some, however, label the discursive approach of cultural studies as 'fruitful', particularly for comparative and international media research, since it "acknowledges culturally differentiated readings or receptions of the media".⁷⁶ It has been argued that the culturalist approach must also take into account the different historical processes, values and beliefs held by journalists and the role of audiences, subcultures, and groups. Schudson argues that it is far too simple to consider the news judgement of media professionals as 'ideology' or the 'common sense' of a hegemonic system since this explanation tends to deny the universality of many human beliefs and attitudes. Schudson gives the 'patriarchal and sexist outlook' as an example to support his view and argues that, even if they are used to serve capitalism "this does not make them capitalist in origin, nor does it mean that they are perfectly or inherently homologous to capitalist structures or requirement of their preservation".⁷⁷

So far I have tried to summarise the principal arguments of the three main approaches to news and journalism. Although these approaches are not mutually exclusive they differ from each other in terms of the emphasis they place on the impact of economic and political factors on news production, the role of journalism and the concept of ideology. Political economists have argued that economic conditions, such as

⁷⁴. P. Golding and G. Murdock, op. cit., 1977, pp.12-43.

⁷⁵. P. Golding and G. Murdock, op.cit., 1991, pp. 15-32.

⁷⁶. Hanno Hardt, 'Comparative Media Research: The World According to America', in *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol.5, 1988, pp. 129-146.

⁷⁷. M. Schudson, op. cit., 1991, p. 153.

ownership; political control and advertising determine the form of cultural and ideological production in which journalism is an important part. The organisational approach, however, has put more emphasis on the organisational and professional aspects of news production by focusing on the factors inherent in news organisations. The values, perceptions and background of journalists have been considered important elements which influence the selection and production of news. On the other hand, the culturalist perspective has evaluated society as broken up into an almost unlimited number of groups, each possessing a distinctive set of attitudes. Thus, media institutions are seen as part of the struggle between competing ideological views. Some groups have more privileged access to media than others to convey their opinions. Thus their world views becomes 'hegemonic' and the representation of reality by the news becomes partial.

What these relevant theories of news and journalism suggest is that the processes of collecting, selecting and reporting of the news are influenced by a number of internal and external factors. News is a socially created product which is affected by corporate ownership patterns, the economic environment, advertisers, ideological structures, personal attitudes and orientations of media workers, professionalism and organizational policies. Journalism as a rather special discourse of representation is caught between the pressures from different institutions and discourses and the expectations of the audience. Therefore, the theoretical framework for this study will be structured around a synthesis of the three approaches reviewed above. It will draw upon mainly the political economy and culturalist interpretations to explain the current structure of television journalism and news coverage in Turkey.

As argued by the political economists the ruling ideology and the economic conditions have a determining influence on the news media. However, it is not only the economic interests of the media owners which influence the agenda and discourse of the news. Sometimes the political and ideological inclination of media organizations plays a significant role in the reporting of particular events and issues. This is not to say that the news content is always directly controlled by the owners of the media companies and 'bias' in news content is consciously introduced to promote the economic and political

interests of the dominant social groups. On the basis of the evidence gathered by the research carried out in the critical tradition, it can be argued that news media tend to reflect events in a fashion that is constructed and framed by the dominant interests and ideologies in the society, and marginalise alternative views. However, television journalism does give space for alternative and oppositional views as well. The presentation of the events, and the issues does not only take place in the domain of hegemonic ideology but also in the realm various contesting ideologies and opinions. Turkish mass media are entangled in these conflicts, even when they attempt to deny or cover them over, or simply to 'report' them. Until the arrival of private channels television news had a monolithic structure represented by the state-owned channel TRT. Today private television in Turkey is a highly conflictual mass medium through which competing economic, political, social and cultural forces are represented. Sometimes there is a considerable degree of disagreement between the definitions in the news coverage of the political events by private television channels and the definitions provided by the political establishment. Turkish television news not only simply disseminate ideas about the dominant political and economic structures but also challenge them. The ideological differences in Turkish society are reflected in the news coverage of television channels.

The general socio-political, economic and cultural characteristics of the society and the organisational pressures on the journalists have impinge upon the news content. These factors have relative significance and influence in different social contexts and time periods. The socio-economic and political environment, professional ideologies, work practices and the relative autonomy of journalists display differences between the developing and the developed countries. The culturalist perspective argues that journalists have a considerable degree of autonomy and relative independence. However, it is important to remember that the relative autonomy of journalists depends on the political traditions and legal framework of the media which determine the degree of the freedom that journalists have from the powerful political and economic interests. The mass media operate under far greater political and economic restraints in developing countries than in developed ones. In developing countries, journalism still suffers from socio-economic and

political turbulence and the lack of social and political consensus. The relative autonomy of journalists also depends on the existence of strong professional associations and trade unions in which journalists come together to set the standards and ethics of their profession and to protect themselves against their bosses and the government. In western democratic countries the professional institutions of journalists are relatively well established with a considerable degree of independence from the political establishment. In Turkey, however, journalists work under considerable political and legal constraints. The weakening of journalists' trade unions and professional associations in recent years means that organisational pressures can be as threatening as the political and legal ones. In Turkey public and private broadcast media are currently subject to different regulations. Therefore, the pressures operating on the journalists in public television are different from those affecting their colleagues in private channels. While TRT journalists are subject to more political pressures and legal constraints journalists working for private channels seem to suffer more heavily from economic pressures and are under greater risk of losing their jobs. Therefore, journalists, whether working in the public or in the private sector, are free as long as they do not challenge the principles and the demands of the organisations they work for. As James Curran argues, "journalists are allowed to be independent only as long as their independence is exercised in a form that conforms to the requirements of their employing organisations".⁷⁸

The nature of news reporting also depends on the institutions in which journalists work. Although these organisations are situated in the same socio-economic environment they may provide different accounts of what is happening in the country and the world. The culturalist approach provides a useful explanation of the ideological differences in the news coverage of different television channels. The ideological role of the media, Hall et al argue, involves the reproduction of the dominant field of ruling ideologies. However, they point out that sometimes the same sources and same topic appear differently even in the media with similar outlook because they have a different target audience and they use

⁷⁸. James Curran, in *op.cit.*, 1990, p. 120.

a different language. In Turkey too differences occur between television channels in terms of their representation of certain important domestic and foreign issues. Sometimes these differences simply reflect well-known political biases of the television channels. The electronic media which are aimed at a particular section in the society such as the Islamists tend to report the news in such a manner which would correspond to the ideological dispositions of their target audience. On the other hand, the content and discourse of the news can show differences even among the channels which share a similar political and economic ideology. In this case the discrepancies can be caused by the organisational structure of the news media, the policies of the media company towards the government or interest groups in the society, the economic interests of the owners and the availability of technology and news sources.

1.3. The Methodological Dimensions of the Research

As research has repeatedly shown, news does not exist in a vacuum. Its selection, production and presentation are situated within particular social, political, economic and institutional settings. It is, therefore, essential to understand various factors which influence the news media, before we begin analysing the news. The journalistic text is "a social and a cultural discourse which exists and has meaning only in relation to other institutions and discourses operating at the same time".⁷⁹

The multiplicity of the factors that influence journalism and news content means that several approaches can be suggested to engage with specific problems concerning this area. Based on the Gramscian concept of hegemony, Todd Gitlin proposes an approach which is both structural and historical in that it explains the regularities in journalistic procedures and products, but at the same time it accounts for historical changes in them.⁸⁰ Similarly, John Hartley argues that:

"in order to understand a discourse we need to look more closely at the social, political and historical conditions of its production and consumption, because

⁷⁹. John Hartley, *Understanding News*, London: Routledge, 1982, p. 89.

⁸⁰. Todd Gitlin, *op.cit.*, 1980, p.251.

these 'determinants' will shape what it says, the way it develops, the status it enjoys, the people who use it, the uses to which it is put and so on."⁸¹

John Thompson, however, suggests a 'tripartite approach'. The first step is the 'socio-historical analysis' which seeks to explore "the characteristics of the institutions within which media messages are produced and through which they are transmitted or diffused to potential recipients".⁸² The patterns of ownership and control in media organisations, the relationship between the state, other social institutions and media companies, the technologies used in production and transmission, the practices and the routines of media personnel form the most important aspects of this first phase. The second step is the 'formal or discursive analysis' of media message which focuses on "media message as a complex symbolic construction which displays an articulated structure".⁸³ The third object domain of the Thompson's proposed approach is the 'reception and appropriation' of media messages. This can be carried out by a combination of a socio-historical analysis and ethnographic research which examine "the specific circumstances and the socially differentiated conditions within which media messages are received by particular individuals".⁸⁴

Due to the vastness and diversity of the areas which have to be covered every approach to news and journalism research inevitably has its own weaknesses. With the aim of drawing upon the strengths of different approaches I have decided to follow an eclectic research model. I begin by considering the socio-economic factors influencing the practices of journalism in Turkey. Then, I examine the present legal and work conditions of journalists. Within this framework, I also analyse the news programmes. Thus the present research consists of two main parts: the examination of historical, socio-economic, political and professional context and the analysis of the television news coverage.

⁸¹. John Hartley, *Understanding News*, London: Methuen, 1982, p.6.

⁸². John B. Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture*, London: Polity, 1990, p. 304.

⁸³. *ibid.*, p. 305.

⁸⁴. *ibid.*, p. 305.



The first part examines the political, economic and socio-cultural changes in Turkey since the 1980s which have had a significant impact on the news and journalism. It also includes the historical development of journalism and news media, the patterns of ownership and control in media organisations, the relationship between the state, other social institutions and media companies, and the legal and professional context of news media. The objective of this inquiry is to understand the relationship between the news and the political and social system, and to indicate the complex and variable nature of this relationship. The main questions which will be addressed within this context are as follows: What are the major factors which influence the practices of journalism and news production? What were the historical conditions that affected the development of journalism and news media in Turkey? How do the legal framework and professional context exert influence on the work of journalists?

As far as the analysis of the news content is concerned I aim to answer following questions: What were the main factors involved in the production and presentation of the news stories? How did different channels cover and present the foreign news, political and economic issues and popular news? What were the main differences and similarities and why did they occur?

In order to be able to address these questions completely and adequately a combination of different research methods was employed. This combination involved:

- i) a general social/political analysis, including patterns of ownership etc.
- ii) interviewing a range of broadcast journalists.
- iii) a detailed comparative quantitative and qualitative analysis of news programmes.

1.3.1. Content Analysis

The analysis of journalistic texts has become an essential way of decoding, an attempt to identify the modes of signification of social and ideological relations. Therefore, detailed examination of the content of television news is an indispensable element of the investigations into contemporary journalism.

Traditionally there has been a distinction between quantitative and qualitative content analysis. Quantitative content analysis is a research procedure that can reveal the patterns or regularities in content through repetition and lead to possible conclusions about the attributes of broadcast news. Therefore, quantitative analysis does not necessarily involve criticism of the news. Qualitative content analysis, however, emphasizes the fluidity of text and context in the interpretive understanding of culture. The textual analysis of the news attempts to identify dominant coverage patterns. It is a complementary process in the sense that it provides a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of the news than the quantitative methods. Qualitative content analysis aims to reveal the range of emphases, explanations, or descriptions provided by different reporters or commentators on different channels.

The qualitative analysis of journalistic texts focus mainly on language. Linguists believe that all media carry a kind of ideological bias because language as a mode of communication convey some meanings which are ideological. News is shaped by values, and it reflects and expresses those values depending on the language in which it is presented. As Roger Fowler points out:

"News is a representation of the world in language; because language is a semiotic code, it imposes a structure of values, social and economic in origin, on whatever is represented; and so inevitably news, like every discourse, constructively patterns that of which it speaks. News is a representation in this sense of construction, it is not value-free reflection of 'facts'."⁸⁵

This research employs both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to identify key categories of content and to analyse the treatment of some selected news stories which have political and social significance. The main aim of the textual analysis was to identify the recurring and exceptional patterns in the coverage of the chosen news stories and to explore the relation of different topics and issues to political, social, economic and historical conditions. This study looks at different categories of news which are mainly derived from previous research as well as the preliminary viewing of the

⁸⁵. Roger Fowler, *Language in the News*, London: Routledge, 1991, p. 4.

recorded material. In doing so, it covers a wide range of issues represented by the television channels during a given period.

1.3.1.1. Sampling

The mainstream channels were chosen because of their agenda-setting power and popularity among large sections of the audience. Moreover they reflect the most symptomatic characteristics of the structural changes in the mass media during the 1990s. The state-owned TRT and one conservative Islamist channel, TGRT, were also chosen to demonstrate the possible differences and similarities, if any, between the channels, which do not share same ideology and presentational style.

1.3.1.2. Quantitative Analysis of News

The first phase in analysing the news was the quantitative analysis which was designed to reveal the general pattern of the news programmes as well as the degree of priorities among different topics and across the media and time.

The content analysis in this study involved the quantification of the one week collection of the main evening newscasts on six major television channels (TRT1, ATV, Show TV, Star, Kanal D, TGRT). The time sample was based on one chronological week which lasted from 12 to 18 December 1994. The main unit of analysis was the news item. Therefore, every news story which could be differentiated from one another throughout the programme by various means such as a new sentence or a visual change was registered as a news item and classified according to its duration, formats, topics, origins, main actors and geographical location.⁸⁶ The advertisement breaks and all other peripheral features, such as the sport news and the weather forecasts were excluded. On all the television channels under investigation these were broadcast separately, usually just after the news. Similarly, the title of programmes, the standardised openings and closing remarks, the headlines, the time devoted to the commercial breaks and the

⁸⁶. The detailed definitions for the categories used in the analysis are given in Appendix A.

'hookers' by which the newscaster revealed the major stories to be seen after the commercial break were also not included in the calculation of the overall length of the news programmes. All news items were timed in minutes and seconds by using an electronic stop-watch. Hookers and headlines were also timed but not, given an item number or categorised or included in the total programme duration. The resulting quantitative data which appear in tables in Chapters four, five, six and seven was calculated and analysed by using Windows-Excel.

1.3.1.3. Qualitative Analysis of News

I transcribed the news text and wrote a detailed description of the news footage. The transcriptions of the news stories analysed amounted to more than sixty thousand words. Though it was time consuming the transcription process was necessary in order to have a sense of the whole structure of news on all channels. What I wanted to find out was how the recent changes in television broadcasting and general ideological influences affected the discourse and the content of the information provided to the Turkish public by different television channels. What were the main similarities and differences between the news stories on different channels? With this aim I selected three main categories of news. They are:

1. Domestic political and economic events (the coverage of European Customs Union and the demonstrations of civil servants) Particularly the reporting of European Customs Union has proved an excellent case to explore the dynamics of the ideological orientation of the Turkish news media and the extent of their relation to the political power.

2. Foreign news (the coverage of the Chechen conflict and Bosnian war). Both cases have provided important evidence to discover the differences between the official foreign policy and the definitions of television channels in relation to foreign news.

3. Popular news (news items concerning human interest stories, crime, tragedy and accidents as well as reality-based programme formats). The analysis of the popular news discusses the reasons for the growing ascendancy of such stories and reality-based

programmes together with their implications for television journalism and Turkish society.

1.3.2. Interviews

In total I conducted 32 interviews. The interviewees were with journalists working for TRT and private television stations as well directors of trade unions and journalism associations. I used open-ended questions which aimed to give an opportunity to media practitioners to express their own views and perceptions of their occupation and the Turkish media in general.

The journalists I interviewed were mainly reporters whose status, job security and income tended to be more moderate compared to the 'elite' or 'star' journalists'. The reasons why the interviews were dominated by reporters were varied. First the reporters in general worked under far greater institutional, political and commercial pressures than their superiors. Thus their perceptions about their work, autonomy, professional values and the news in general tended to be more critical than those working in the higher ranks of the media organisations. Moreover, the reporters proved to be more accessible than the journalists at the managerial levels. News departments in television channels have busy schedules. They are also invariably politically sensitive, and are suspicious of outsiders. In terms of providing access and supplying the information relevant to this study TRT management and journalists were more co-operative than their counterparts in private channels.

1.4. Conclusion

In the present chapter I have attempted to provide an overview of significant developments in broadcasting news media and journalism. I have argued that the deregulation, privatisation and globalisation of the broadcasting industries since the 1980s have had some paradoxical implications for television journalism. The democratisation and the liberalisation of the public sphere have been considered to have had a positive impact on the nature of television news and the practices of broadcast journalists. On the

other hand, the continuing political and legal pressures on news media in some countries have not disappeared. Moreover, the increased dependency on Western news agencies and global news channels of the news media in developing countries have remained to be an obstacle for a more balanced and free global news exchange. As a result of the commercialisation of news media, the accepted obligation of television journalism to the public interest gradually began to change, with a variety of new strategies and genres in television news production.

In the second part of the chapter, I describe the context and aims of the study. This is followed by a critical discussion of the main theoretical perspectives on news and journalism. The theoretical framework of the study draws upon mainly the political economy and cultural interpretations to explain the present situation in television journalism and news production in Turkey. The research model of the study is based on a combination of methods; the examination of historical, socio-economic, political and professional context of Turkish news media and the quantitative and qualitative content analysis of news coverage on six different channels, and interviews with correspondents in public and private television networks.

CHAPTER 2: Socio-Economic Context of News Production in Turkey

This chapter aims to demonstrate how the context of journalism and news broadcasting in Turkey have been fundamentally altered since the early 1980s, mainly due to constitutional changes and liberal economic policies which resulted in the privatisation of broadcasting in the early 1990s. However, before turning to the recent changes, it is also necessary to review the origins and development of journalism and mass media with its key events and turning points to provide a background for the present situation. Therefore, this chapter will begin with a critical account of the history of Turkish press and broadcasting. During the course of this chapter, the impact of the 1980 military rule and subsequent civil governments on the existing political and economic structures will also be investigated with regard to their consequences for news media. This will be followed by an examination of the changing political discourse of the 1990s in Turkey, in which secular Islamist rivalry and Kurdish insurgency have emerged as the most dominant issues which led to the rise of the alternative and controversial tendencies in news media. Finally, I will examine the integration of television into the corporate power structure and the problems created by private ownership and the concentration of control and influence in the hands of few large companies.

2.1. The Evolution of Journalism and Newspapers

The story of Turkish journalism has been interwoven with political, economic and societal transformations since the emergence of the first newspapers in mid-nineteenth century. Turkish Press as a genuinely mass medium began with the launch of the official newspaper, *Takvim-i Vakayi* in 1831 and a semi-official newspaper, *Ceride-i Havadis* in 1840 when the Ottoman Empire was experiencing a period of great regression which finally led to its collapse at the turn of the twentieth century. The Palace soon understood the power of newspapers as disseminators of the ideas which could prove to be threatening to the

Empire. Since then, the freedom of press has been a matter of great controversy for Turkish journalism due to governments' willingness to control the newspapers.

Unlike Western journalists who were mostly coming from bourgeoisie, the early Turkish journalists were the public servants of the Sultan.¹ The main reason for this was the difference between the class structure of Ottoman society and that of European society. The Ottoman Empire in its classical period was characterised by "a powerfully centralised state structure with a bureaucratic elite receiving the agricultural surplus in the form of tax revenue".² Cities were the centre of bureaucracy instead of commerce, and industry had not developed. Therefore, the bourgeoisie and the working classes had not existed in any real sense.³ The ruling class symbolised by the Sultan had absolute control over all the property. Therefore, it was not surprising that early newspapers had been owned by the state. Newspaper readership had been limited to a relatively small numbers of educated elite who held ruling class and pro-establishment views and the interests of these groups and the political news dominated the content of first newspapers. For most of the journalists, a post in these early newspapers had been a step further towards the higher ranks of the state bureaucracy. One of the aims of the first newspapers was to inform officials about the political and economic decisions taken by the head of state. However, in spite of their officialism, these newspapers made some contributions to the dynamics of Ottoman society in terms of development, secularism, unity, modernism, language and education.⁴

After the first private newspapers, *Tercüman-ı Ahval* in 1860 and *Tasvir-i Efkar* in 1862, the public servant type of journalist gradually began to be replaced by professional

1. Orhan Kologlu, 'Basin Nereye?' (The Press, Where to?) in *Devlet ve Basın* (State and the Press), ÇGD Publications, 1993, p. 84.

2. Çağlar Keyder, 'The Political Economy of Turkish Democracy' in *New Left Review*, Number:115 May-June 1979, pp. 3-44.

3. Emre Kongar, *Türkiye'nin Toplumsal Yapısı* (The Social Structure of Turkey), Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1981. p.60.

4. Orhan Kologlu, *Türkiye'de Basın* (The Press in Turkey), Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1992. p.16.

ones. Meanwhile as a result of the efforts towards Westernisation the social structure of the Ottoman State had also started to change. But due to the absence of a well-planned political-economy the moves in the direction of Westernisation became one of the reasons which speeded up the collapse of the state. The social stratification of Ottoman society had been changing because the cities were becoming the commercial centres controlled by the Western nations. Thus, the city population started to gain importance. It was during this period of non-colonial peripheralisation that Ottoman intellectuals started to contemplate and theorise the fate of the Empire. This gave rise to a growing opposition between the Ottoman state and the intellectuals who were seeking alternative solutions to the political and societal problems of the country.

The period of Constitutional Reforms was halted by the 33 years long despotic regime of Abdülhamit the Second which lasted between 1876 and 1909. During this period, the press and some other published media were censored, intimidated and silenced. Not only the Young Turks Press, but even the literary magazines were prosecuted. Some of the journalists and intellectuals, confused by fear and suspicion did not hesitate to inform on their opponents to the Palace and the state officials.⁵ This intolerance to opposite ideologies, Ahmet Oktay argues, continued to be one of the 'symptomatic' features of Turkish intellectuals even after the establishment of parliamentary democracy. Oktay claims that most Turkish journalist have had the illusion that the freedom they have been long for would only arrive when the political parties they support came to power.⁶

In 1909 the Young Turks took over the government. In the aftermath of the Second Constitutional Reform initiated by Young Turks to end the absolute rule of the monarch and to achieve a permanent balance in favour of a modern state mechanism, the Press regime was changed and the number of newspapers exploded. Another important development was that

⁵. Ahmet Oktay, *Toplumsal Degisme ve Basin* (Social Change and The Press), Istanbul: BFS Yayinlari, 1987, p. 38.

⁶. *ibid.*, p. 39

the first domestic news agency, the *Ottoman Telegraph Agency* was established in 1910 in order to break the monopoly of Reuters and Havas. The first seven years of the Second Reform Period had made important contributions to the improvement of the press freedom. However, even in this liberated environment the journalists who disagreed with the ruling party, the *Committee of Union and Progress* were suppressed and even killed by their opponents. Meanwhile, the largely commercial bourgeoisie which developed in this period were the main beneficiaries of the new Turkish state founded in 1923.

With the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, the 600 years sultanate had ended. Soon after, national forces gathered under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal to organise the Anatolian resistance movement against the victorious forces of Western nations, including Britain, France and Italy, which occupied parts of Ottoman Empire, apart from a small region of interior Anatolia. The newspapers which supported the movement won the sympathy of the National Forces. Mustafa Kemal and his friends had absolute control over the communications network. They published a newspaper, *Irade-i Milliye* in 1919 and established the present Anatolian News Agency in 1920 to disseminate the aim and the philosophy of the resistance.⁷ The journalists who disagreed with the philosophy of the resistance were prosecuted in Independence Courts. Therefore, the opposition Press was demolished and new pro-Kemalist newspapers, like *Cumhuriyet* and *Milliyet* emerged during National Independence War.

The establishment of the Turkish Republic opened a new era for Turkish Press. Republican, statist, secular, reformist, and anti-imperialist characteristics of Kemalist ideology together with the superstructural aspects of Western capitalist modernisation formed the new ideological aspiration of Turkish journalism. The Republican People's Party (RPP) founded by Mustafa Kemal, although it contained diverse groups and tendencies within it, remained as the single party until 1945. The ideological dependence of the press on the new

⁷. Nuri Inugur, *Türk Basın Tarihi* (Turkish Press History), Istanbul: Journalism Association Publications, 1992, p. 23, 38.

political regime was reinforced by the owners of newspapers who were also members of the parliaments of the RPP.⁸ During this period, both socialist and Islamic fundamentalist movements were put under strict state-control, they were curbed and even banned. The leftist press was allowed to exist as long as it was in line with the Kemalist ideology. The RPP even provoked some fanatic nationalist groups to attack *Tan*, a left-wing newspaper, which was being accused by the RPP government of being 'communist'.⁹ The radical leftist press and publications had been banned and closed down.

In the 1950s, Turkey was established as a loyal outpost of the West on the borders of Soviet Union. After the liberalisation of the political regime with the acceptance of multi-party system in 1945, the Press became the main source of news for the public due to the RPP government's control of the radio. Influenced by the new political environment, the newspapers began to devote much of their coverage to the conflict between two main political parties. In 1950, the twenty-seven year rule of the RPP came to an end. The conservative right-wing *Democrat Party* (DP), which captured office with an overwhelming majority promised to curtail state intervention in the economy, to transfer state-owned enterprises to the private sector, to ensure full recompense for the peasant's toil and to guarantee religious freedom. The DP government permitted much greater democratic freedoms than those which had been the norm of RPP regime. In a very short time, it won the support of liberal circles and intellectuals as well as the rural population. However, it never went so far as to lift the ban on the socialist movement but it did permit a political opposition and opposition press. However, both RPP and DP were no different in discriminating in favour of their supporters in terms of the state subsidiaries and the allocation of the print machinery and the paper.

⁸. Orhan Kologlu, 1992, op.cit., p. 65

⁹. Nuri Inugur, op.cit., p.206.

It was during this time that circulation of the press had increased due to the dissatisfaction of the masses with the radio. In 1941 there was a total 113 newspapers with 60.000 circulation which increased to 100.00 in 1946. Until the arrival of *Hürriyet* in 1948, which was a novelty for Turkish journalism a high percentage of the content of the newspapers consisted of political news while the coverage of economic matters and human interest stories remained limited. After the Second World War non-political subjects began to appear in newspapers. The press, working as propaganda machines of the political parties and the newspapers which failed to renovate themselves were soon wiped away from the market. During this time Babiali Press managed to reach remote areas of Anatolia and started using the latest technologies imported from Western countries.¹⁰ The establishment of the Journalism Association and Trade Union in 1946, and the first Journalism College in 1950 within the body of the University of Istanbul had been very positive steps in terms of the professionalisation of journalism in Turkey.

By the end of the 1950s the liberal fractions of the intelligentsia who had originally supported the DP against the authoritarian regime of the RPP, were the first to be disappointed as the government became less tolerant of criticisms and opted for an increasingly anti-democratic stance. The political atmosphere became very tense as the intellectual opposition in the press and the universities increased with the governments taking refuge in a more repressive and authoritarian policy. Many journalists were arrested and imprisoned. This time, the RPP, the original authoritarian party accommodated liberals, disillusioned by the growing despotic tendency of the DP. By 1960, not only the bureaucrats and the intellectuals but also Istanbul business circles rallied to the ranks of opposition. These were followed by a military coup on 27 May 1960 which was openly solicited by the urban intelligentsia. The Press, defending the leftists views combined with Kemalist radicalism contributed to the 1960 military intervention.

¹⁰. Orhan Kologlu, 1992, op.cit., p. 72

The 1961 Constitution which was written by a constitutional assembly gave voice to aspirations for social justice and social rights. This period after the adoption of this constitution saw a flowering of political ideas, particularly on the left. As a result of modifications brought about in the Press Act during 1953-1956, the freedom of expression and press had been largely restricted by the DP rule. These restrictive clauses were rescinded after 1960 and the constitution of 1961 secured the freedom of thought and its expression. But these stipulations of the constitution, though set out in great detail, were never actually implemented.

The 1960s signalled the commencement of the transformation of an agrarian, feudalistic society into a partly modernised and urbanised society with growing industrial and service sectors. This produced profound changes in Turkish society. During the 1960s, the relations between the Press and the business circles began to get closer. The arrival of television in 1968 caused Babiali Press to become more dependent on the new technologies, capital and the advertising revenues in order to compete with broadcast media. *Hürriyet* became the biggest newspaper in terms of its circulation and influence on the public opinion, and it was also the first newspaper in Turkey which became a holdings company. During 1960s, the increase in the number of university graduate journalists and on-the-job training opportunities with the active participation of journalists improved the level of qualifications and the education of journalists.¹¹

The events of 1968 with rising violence and a deteriorating political situation culminated the 1971 military intervention. After this second coup, Turkish politics in the 1970s was characterised by fragmentation and polarisation, by a lack of decisive authority on the part of government. Polarisation came to characterise not only the parties, but was insinuated into other important social sectors as well, including the Press, organised labour, the university, the civil bureaucracy and even the police. At the same time, extremist

¹¹. Nuri Inugur, op.cit., p.410.

militants engaged in escalating waves of violence. Political assassinations came to include members of parliament, prominent journalists and university professors.

Even in this chaotic setting, the newspapers managed to reach a daily circulation of around 3 million and the commercialisation of the Babiali Press continued. However, it was also during this time that the Press began to suffer from circulation losses due to the steady rise in importance of television and the effect of an unstable economic and political system. The recession and decline in sales led newspapers to seek other means of increasing their sales. With the aid of promotion and lottery strategies they tried to develop their market share of the newspaper-buying public.

2.2. Development of Broadcast Media

The first regular radio broadcasting in Turkey began in 1927 with the help of the poor quality of technical communication facilities inherited from the Ottoman Empire. The wireless stations in Istanbul and Ankara which belonged to the PTT (the state owned Post, Telegraph and Telephone Service) were under the control of the government. In 1926, a private company, Turkish Wireless and Telephone Company (TTTAS) had been granted a ten year contract to carry out the first radio broadcasting. TTTAS first built a radio studio in Istanbul transmitting over 1200 m. and built a second in Ankara to transmit over 1554 m. using the PTT's building. This company also cooperated with a French company known as 'Compagnie Française de Radio'.

During the period of TTTAS's radio broadcasting (1927-1936) music and entertainment programmes dominated the overall transmission. Most of the broadcasting time was devoted to music programmes which amounted to between 71% and 95%.¹² Among the non-music programmes, however, news and news programmes had the highest share. Apart

¹². Uygur Kocabasoglu, *Sirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna* (From the Wireless Company to the State Radio), Ankara University, Faculty of Political Sciences Publications No: 442, Ankara, 1980, p.82.

from one daily evening news bulletin, a news programme, *Sesli Radyo Gazetesi* (*Talking Radio Newspaper*) was the first radio news programme.¹³

The first radio broadcasting in Turkey was often threatened by the financial difficulties of the TTTAS. In spite of the government's support, it was soon understood that commercial radio was unable to survive due to the insufficiency of advertising revenues. After a decade of commercial initiation, radio entered a new stage of development when the permission granted to the private sector was terminated and direct government control was adopted. In 1937, all radio transmissions came under government control giving the authority to the PTT. Fixing and increasing the transmission hours were among the first attempts of the PTT to improve radio broadcasting which had formerly been criticised in terms of both technical and programme quality. However, the programme quality improved only slightly during PTT administration between 1938-1940. During this period, Wireless Law was accepted by the Parliament in 1937 as the first broadcasting law of Turkey. By this law the tradition of state monopoly on radio television broadcasting which persisted until 1990s was being legally recognised for the first time.

Before the 1950 general elections, the RPP government provided the opposition parties the right to use the radio for their party political broadcasts. However, when the Democrat Party came to power in 1950, the use of Turkish radio for the partisan broadcasting undermined the principle of impartiality. Radio became the voice of the DP government. Therefore, the 1950s witnessed radio becoming a target of criticism due to its extensive and partial coverage of the government. This remained unaltered until 27 May 1960 with the overthrow of DP Government by the Turkish Army which brought new implementations for radio as well as other institutions of the society. Many steps were taken to establish autonomy and impartiality in radio news and programmes. Professionalism, training of programme personnel and the establishment of new transmitters were given priority after the 1960

¹³. *ibid.*, p.95.

military coup. Education programmes for school age children which began in 1962 were followed by some new genres such as news documentaries, village programmes, quiz shows, youth programmes and the programmes dealing with the problems of the country. Furthermore, first training courses for the programme personnel were conducted in 1962 and 1963. Following these efforts trained personnel were appointed as radio producers, directors or writers. With the acquisition of new production equipment and professional personnel, radio broadcasts were relatively improved. However, radio broadcasts could not have been received by even half of the population.

With the establishment of TRT, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation on May, 1964 broadcasting was designed to function as an 'autonomous' institution by Law 359. With the aim of improving audio broadcasting in Turkey, TRT started to maximise all available facilities and resources in order to produce new programmes, and to train technical and creative personnel. It was also after the establishment of TRT that a special unit for the production of news was formed. Within the framework of the Five Year Development Plans, radio transmissions improved in terms of the number and the power of the transmitters, the coverage of the population, the number of new channels and the overall transmitting time. However, the autonomous status of the TRT could only continue until 1971 when an amendment was made to 1961 Constitution following the Memorandum of the Armed Forces in 1970. The principle of autonomy had caused controversies and conflicts that began soon after the operation of TRT. The central right Justice Party government which came to power in 1966, had inherited the political philosophy of the Democrat Party. Therefore, TRT was accused by the government of having leftist bias in its programmes. After this second military intervention, the autonomy of TRT was damaged, the general director of the corporation was replaced by a three-star general and several producers lost their jobs.

While television was living its golden age as a most important medium of the world in the sixties, it was still under the questioning of the state development planners and the government in Turkey. There were some discussions about why television was excluded from

the First Five year Development Plan (1963-1967).¹⁴ One of the reasons for this delay was the refusal of the State Planning Organisation to allocate required funds for television because television was considered as a financial burden on the Turkish economy. On the other hand, there was an increasing demand from the foreign television companies proposing the start of a television channel in Turkey. In 1959, about 17 foreign corporations had applied to the Turkish government. In the mean time, the first television transmission was started by Istanbul Technical University in 1952. The university produced several amateur programmes continuing intermittently over 20 years. There was a limited number of receivers and a small transmitter and the television broadcasts could only be watched in Istanbul. The increase in the number of television sets between 1964 and 1968 made it possible that other neighbouring countries' television channels such as Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia could be received by a very small minority of the population who had highly powerful and expensive television antennas. However, the Technical University had to stop its broadcasting in 1970 because of political student movements and then transferred its equipment to TRT. At that time, the University estimated that there were 10.000 television receivers and 50.000-60.000 viewers in Turkey.

According to a technical agreement which was signed between Germany and Turkey in 1963 a television training studio centre was established in Ankara. The aim of this centre was to train television programme and technical personnel. Four years later, this training studio was converted to a telecasting centre as a result of another German donation which also included a small television transmitter. With this transmitter came the first regular test broadcasting of TRT television for three days of the week about two or three hours each day

¹⁴. Some argued that the planners did not comprehend the importance of mass communication in the national development. However, the 1961 Constitution had aimed that national saving had to be increased due to the needs of the society and the country. Therefore, it was claimed that since television could cause unnecessary consumption, loss of foreign exchange and the increase of dependency on the foreign imported goods, it was not among the priorities of the country's growth. See Aysel Aziz, *Elektronik Yayincilikta Temel Bilgiler (Handbook of Electronic Communications)*, Ankara, 1989 and Önder Senyapili, *Televizyonun Türk Toplumuna Etkileri (The Impact of Television on Turkish Society)*, Istanbul, 1976.

on 31 January 1968. However, the first television broadcasting was criticised since it began "without any serious debate, questioning and preparation".¹⁵

1972 was the starting year of both television's real development in Turkey and of the problems which had to be tackled to achieve this development. Lack of planning together with bureaucratic and political pressures were experienced more in television production than in radio. These drawbacks often kept the Turkish television service far from flourishing. Unfortunately, due to inadequate planning and production facilities TRT television ended up transmitting many foreign programmes and films, many of which had no relevance whatsoever to Turkey's national aspirations, to her culture, nor to the general enlightenment of her own society. In 1974 TRT strengthened its news Department by increasing the number of personnel, news bureaus abroad and news and current affairs programmes. *Güne Bakis (Looking at the Day)* in 1974 was the first news programme. *Olayların İçinden (From Inside the Events)* was the first current affairs programme which was a Turkish version of BBC's Panorama and its producers, Zeki Sözer and Örsan Öymen were trained by the BBC. Another programme *Açık Oturum (Open Debate)* invited guests to discuss a current issue. However, due to the pressure of the government TRT's producers had to be careful and therefore the programmes were ideologically closed to alternative views.

Despite all problems and difficulties, Turkish television had carried on spreading throughout the country by the technical improvements which were considered in the following development plans. TRT managed at least to improve its technical infrastructure by 1977. In that year, 60% percent of the country could be reached by 58 television transmitters. However, it was not until 1982 that colour broadcasting was introduced.

The late 80s witnessed a very dramatic increase in the channel capacity of the TRT which from one channel in 1986 reached six channels in 1990. Following the launch of TV2 in 1986 which was the first step in the move towards multi-channel broadcasting, TRT had

¹⁵. Haluk Sahin, 'Ideology of Television: A Theoretical Framework and A Case Study', *Media Culture and Society*, Vol.2(1) April 1979, pp. 161-169.

four more new channels in less than two years. GAP TV which began its transmission in 1989 is the only regional television of Turkey. Its main aim is to contribute to the biggest agricultural and irrigation project of Turkey, known as GAP by creating a socio-cultural atmosphere among the people in south eastern parts of Turkey. TV5, the international channel of TRT, started in 1990 initially targeted Turkish workers and their families abroad, particularly in Germany and later covered Central Asian Turkic Republics. While TV3 in 1989 was planned to broadcast foreign serials, films and music programmes, TV4 in 1990 was considered as an educational channel which consisted of Open University and other vocational programmes and documentaries. During 1978-1983 FM Radios and external broadcasting were improved and the number of transmitters and their power increased. These radios were afterwards renamed as Radio1, Radio2 and Radio3 to be joined by the fourth in 1987.

2.3. Socio-Political Context of 1980s and Turkish Media

The changing political and economic structure of the 1980s and early 1990s has been a decisive factor in the present structure and turbulences of Turkish news media and journalism. The contemporary practices of journalism in Turkey began to be shaped by the dominant ideological framework of the 1980s' political and, perhaps more influentially, by the economic structure of the country.

Prior to 12 September 1980, the country was in political and economic chaos. One of the principal aims of the Turkish Army was to restore order and to restructure the political life of the country. In order to carry this out, it began a process of depoliticization of the urban youth which was seen as responsible for the excessive fragmentation and polarization of political ideologies, and also the tendency toward anarchy. In particular, leftist movements were harshly crushed resulting in the arrest and trial of revolutionaries, social democrats, trade unionists and even the members of the Peace Association which included among its members distinguished left-wing intellectuals. On the other hand, many policies of the

military government encouraged and supported Islam "as an anti-dote to all forms of left-wing politics, and the adoption of the market economy which contradicted the Kemalist principle of statism and commitment to a fair and just society".¹⁶ Although the military regime regarded itself as the guardian of Kemalism it made religious education compulsory part of the curriculum in primary and secondary schools. As William Hale states, this constituted an important part of the 1980 coup's depoliticization campaign:

"The regime's belief apparently was that if the young generation received no religious instruction at all, then a moral void would be left which would be filled by Marxism, fascism or anti-systemic ideologies".¹⁷

The beneficiaries of the temporary military rule had been the business circles who gained long-term economic advantages from the suppression of the labour movement, the ban on strikes and wage freezes. On the other hand, although the major labour confederation (TÜRK-İS) was allowed to survive, two politically active trade union organisations; DISK (left-wing) and MİSK (right-wing) were closed down. They were regarded as partly responsible for helping to propagate extremist political views and for driving the country towards economic chaos. The political and legal sanctions and restrictions on civil and democratic rights together with the arrest, punishment and imprisonment of people, who had opposed the new political regime brought about despondency, discouragement and demoralization among people. This was the beginning of a depoliticization process for not only the masses but also the intellectuals and the mass media. The Martial Law suspended newspapers, including some of Turkey's most respected dailies and journals.¹⁸ With the fear of closure, the press, with the exception of a few publications and writers, tried to avoid

¹⁶. Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 214.

¹⁷. William Hale, *Turkish Politics and The Military*, London: Routledge, 1994, p.298.

¹⁸. On press censorship in Turkey during the 1980 military regime see Alpay Kabacalı, *Türkiye'de Basın Sansürü*, (*Press Censorship In Turkey*), Istanbul: Journalists Association Publications, 1990 and Hasan Cemal, *Tank Sesiyle Uyanmak* (*Waking Up With the Sound of a Tank*), Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1986.

confrontation with the then military government. Some newspapers even welcomed the coup on the grounds that it ended the political violence and the economic crisis.¹⁹

One of the important consequences of the depoliticization process and worsening economic conditions for Turkish media was the increasing sensationalism in the Press and the emergence of tabloid journalism. For example, the early 1980s was marked by the introduction of a newspaper, called *Tan* whose cheapness and simplicity attracted the masses. *Tan* reported even very serious political and economic matters in a very superficial way. Soon it became the emblem of 'yellow', 'bonk', and 'yuck' journalism which focused on sex, scandals, stories of murders, the bizarre, the tragic and the pathetic. Its front and back page stories were fabricated according to the big, colourful and usually sexually explicit photographs chosen. In some cases, using slang and playing with words, headlines implied sexual fantasies while the main body of news told completely different stories which were usually ludicrously ridiculous. As a consequence of the decreasing readers' interest due to the arrival of Tan-like newspapers, and the transfer of Rahmi Turan, *Tan's* chief editor by *Sabah*, a rival paper *Tan* lost its initial popularity and faded away.

Following the return to democracy with general elections on 6 November 1983, the center-right Motherland Party (MP), which gained the majority of the votes started to implement neo-classical economic policies in the tradition of Margaret Thatcher of Britain and Ronald Reagan of the US. Export-led growth, greater dependence on market forces and minimum state intervention in economic and social life have been the backbone of these economic policies which led to the prevalence of commercial logic, consumption culture and individualistic values in society. Contrary to the pledges of Turgut Özal, then Prime Minister and the leader of Motherland Party that economic liberalism would bring political freedom, the restrictive constitutional framework and undemocratic laws inherited from the military government were not amended. The trade unions law, the higher education law, the law on

¹⁹. Nursen Mazici, *Askeri Darbelerin Sivil Yönetimlere Etkisi (The Impact of Military Interventions on Civil Governments in Turkey)*, Istanbul: Gür Yayinlari. 1989.

elections and political parties, the press law, the penal code and the law governing the running of Turkey's radio and television all remained unchanged because of Özal's and his party's little interest in improving democratic conditions. In fact, Özal, had admitted even before the coup d'etat that a full democratic setting was not suitable for implementing his economic policies.²⁰ The 'party-centred' polity of the MP governments had turned into a 'ruler-dominated', and they remained silent to some civil societal elements. Metin Heper draws our attention to the fact that two successive MP governments' relations with interest groups' politics were "mostly clientelistic rather than pluralistic and/or neocorporatic".²¹

However, it should be pointed out that there was a gradual relaxation of political restrictions after 1983. The leaders of some leftist organizations were released. Meanwhile, TÜRK-İS, Turkey's largest trades union confederation, started to express views on political matters and to call strikes in a number of industries. The number of books and newspaper editorials which were critical of the 1980 coup and the policies of the MP government increased. The official application of Turkey to the European Community for admission as a full member also put external pressures on the government to improve human rights and democracy. On the other hand, the liberal economic policies of MP governments after 1985 which resulted in rising inflation and foreign debts, falling GNP rates and wages led to political intolerance of the MP rule particularly towards the press. It was during the time of MP governments that economic and also political pressures on the press intensified. Any critical stance by the press towards the then government led to their retaliation by

²⁰. Feroz Ahmad points out that "Özal, with his close ties to financial circles in the West (especially the IMF and the World Bank), had been consulted by the *junta* immediately after the *coup*. He is reported to have told them the reversal of his economic programme would be the *coup de grâce* to the Turkish economy and asked that he be allowed to continue implementing his policies with even greater vigour. The generals accepted his assessment and appointed him the "economic supremo". Parallel with an economic policy virtually dictated from Washington, the 12 September regime also adopted a foreign and military policy designed to serve Western interests in the region reeling from the impact of the revolution in Iran.' (*The Making of Modern Turkey*, p.183.)

²¹. Metin Heper, 'Turkish Democracy Reconsidered: Illusion Breeding Disillusion', in Heiko Korner, Rasul Shams (eds), *Institutional Aspect of Economic Integration of Turkey into the European Community*, Hamburg Institute of Economic Research, 1990, Hamburg. p.37.

implementing a public enterprise advertisements embargo and increasing the newsprint prices. For example, in 1988 *Günaydin*, *Tercüman* and *Bulvar* were deprived of the advertisements of state banks which resulted in a severe decline in their revenues and the owner of *Günaydin* was forced to sell the paper. Nazlı Ilicak, the chief editorial writer for *Tercüman* and later for *Bulvar*, who had been critical of Prime Minister Turgut Özal's policies, was compelled to stop her editorials for a while. Her replacement by Altemur Kilic, who was known for his close relationships with Özal family and the ruling Motherland Party was seen the only solution to end the financial problems of *Tercüman*. Thus, as Sahin Alpay has argued:

"[c]hanges in newspaper's leading editors and attitudes towards the government are often due to economic pressures by the government on newspaper owners in the form of punishments or rewards".²²

Moreover, the state-owned news agencies and broadcasting organizations were equally influenced by the then political regime's policies towards the media. The Director General of the Anatolian News Agency (AA), Hüsamettin Çelebi resigned from his post due to the government's pressure on the news policy of the AA. Following his resignation, the director of news, Vecdi Sevig was dismissed by the government on the grounds that his news policy was not supportive enough to advocate the policies of the government.²³

On the broadcasting front similar trends were experienced. After the 1980 coup a retired general was appointed as the Director General of TRT. The new legal framework which introduced a new supervisory body with markedly wide powers to control broadcasting services left TRT more vulnerable towards governmental intervention to its managerial, organisational and programme structure. During the terms of office of TRT Director Generals

²² Sahin Alpay, 'Journalists: Cautious Democrats', in Metin Heper, Ayşe Öncü, Heinz Kramer (eds.), *Turkey and the West: Changing Political and Cultural Identities*, London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., pp. 69-91.

²³ On the relationship between the government and the news media, see Güventürk Görgülü, *Basında Ekonomik Bağımlılık (Economic Dependency of the Press)*, Istanbul: Journalist Association Publications, 1991, pp.49-59.

who shared similar opinion with the MP government, the corporation functioned as "a vehicle for the promotion of the politics of the governing party".²⁴ However, the case of Cem Duna, who used to be an adviser to Özal provided an interesting exception. Duna ordered the suspension of a government programme which was supposed to go on air immediately before the local elections in 1989. The broadcast of the programme would have breached the regulations on elections. This was the last straw in the souring relationship between the TRT administration and the government which led to Duna's resignation. While leaving his post, Duna said "I came with the order of the Prime Minister, and I am going with it".²⁵

The eroding popularity of the government due to the worsening economic conditions, rising inflation, unemployment, foreign debts and the falling wages and purchasing power resulted in the expected victory of the opposition in the October 1991. This time the elections produced a coalition government, consisting of one right-wing and one social-democratic party. At the outset the new government appeared to adopt a far more liberal attitude. The modifications in the Articles 141, 142 and 163 of the Penal Code which dealt with communist and religious activities were important steps in democratizing the political system. The new government also removed the law forbidding the use of Kurdish language in speech and writing which had been passed by the military regime in 1983. Soon the Kurdish language books and newspapers began to proliferate even though the Kurdish problem remained as one of the most serious internal conflicts in contemporary Turkey. Both ruling and opposition parties proposed constitutional reforms to improve democratic rights. In June 1995, the Turkish parliament voted for the amendment of some of the articles of 1982 Constitution. Although some amendments failed to win sufficient votes the others expanded rights of the workers and other democratic rights. The removal of the preamble from the

²⁴. Asu Aksoy and Nabi Avci, 'Spreading Turkish Identity', *InterMedia*, International Institute of Communications, Vol.20, No.4-5, August/September, 1992, pp.39-40.

²⁵. Hifzi Topuz, M. Tali Öngören, Aysel Aziz and Mesut Onen (eds), *Yarının Radyo ve Televizyon Düzeni (Tomorrow's Radio and Television Order)*, Istanbul: ILAD Publications, 1990, p.115.

Constitution which had justified the 1980 coup d'etat was a progressive sign showing that political parties were more committed than ever to eliminate any possibility of another military takeover and also restrict the involvement of the Army in politics. Other changes brought greater freedoms for trade unions, professional organizations and cooperative organizations to engage in politics. Recently, the 'Anti-Terrorism Law', enacted by the parliament in 1991 to punish the dissemination of 'separatist propaganda' was amended as a result of continuous pressures from liberal opinion in Turkey and the European Union.

The second half of the 1990s opened a new era in Turkish political life. The Prime Minister Tansu Çiller resigned in September 1995, following disagreement with her coalition partner, the Republican People's Party (RPP). The collapse of the coalition government and the failure of Çiller's efforts to form a new government resulted in early general elections. The pro-Islamic Welfare Party emerged as the first party in the general elections on 24 December 1995, taking 158 seats in the 550-seat parliament with just over 21% of the vote, which consisted mainly the support of the radicalised Muslim intellectuals and the urban poor. However, none of the political parties received enough votes to form a government on their own. After long negotiations between the three largest parties, two rival center right parties, the TPP and the MP formed a coalition government in March 1995 which lasted only 11 weeks. This opened the way to power for the Islamist Welfare Party. In 28 June 1996 the WP and the TPP formed a coalition government which was approved by President Süleyman Demirel and won the confidence vote. The WP aimed to pursue an independent foreign policy which included the renegotiation of a customs union agreement between Ankara and the European Union, the expulsion from Turkey of allied planes protecting Kurds in neighbouring Iraq and revision of the military training agreement between Israel and Turkey. While in office, the party implemented mild Islamic reforms, such as allowing women employees to wear headscarves in government offices. The secular elite, however, was convinced that the Welfare Party had a radical hidden agenda. The Welfare Party led Turkey's first pro-Islamist government for nearly a year, until pressure from the military establishment

forced it out of power in May 1997. The President gave the duty of forming a new government to Mesut Yilmaz, the leader of MP, by now the second largest right-wing political party. At present, a coalition of the MP and Democratic Left Party continues to be in power, with the support of some small right and left wing parties. On 16th January 1998, the pro-Islamist Welfare Party, the largest party in the Turkish Parliament, was shut down by the Constitutional Court, on the grounds that it had acted against the principles of the secular Republic. The Welfare Party still holds a majority of votes and is still popular, particularly among economically poorer sections of the society, and some pro-Islamists intellectuals in the Turkish media. Therefore, the recent developments in Turkish politics voiced serious concern about the implications of the WP's closure for democratic pluralism, and freedom of expression.

2.4. Political Tendencies and Turkish Media

Today the major socio-cultural cleavage in Turkish politics has been the division, and polarisation between secularists, and the Sunni Muslim followers. The most notable binary oppositions are between the modern-urban-European formation in education, politics and economy and the rural-traditional-peripheral formation in religious education, traditional forms of religious beliefs, rituals and folklore. Political discourse after 1980 has been marked by the constant growth of Islamic fundamentalism, which has become more influential amongst the bureaucracy, within education, the government, most political parties and in the mass media. After 1980, the pattern of income distribution was altered in favour of the rich at the expense of those in middle and lower classes. The abrupt rise in inflation rates, further declines in the purchasing power of wage and salary earners, and tight economic policies in favour of the rich have brought about the disillusionment of the lower and even the middle classes with the existing political parties. The lower classes living in the shanty-towns of the metropolis and small towns of Anatolia were hit by the dire economic developments of

the 1990s.²⁶ Writing on the explosion of Islamic fundamentalism in the past two decades Manuel Castells argues that these developments seem to be "related to both disruption of traditional societies, and to the failure of the nation-state, created by nationalist movements, to accomplish modernization, develop the economy, and/or to distribute the benefits of economic growth among the population at large".²⁷ In Turkey, the main reason for the recent Islamic revivalism in Turkey, as some academicians argue, has been "the failure of the political system to reproduce itself".²⁸ Commenting on these developments, Abramowitz points out that:

"The most dangerous threat to secularism comes, in fact not from religious practices but from the rapid transformation of Turkish life, that change has created unemployment, vast income inequalities, and a squalid life for many urban dwellers. Unemployed students are particularly worrisome. With the decay of ideology and the decline of political parties on the Left and Right, fundamentalist Islam is the only radical alternative in the Turkish system. As in Algeria, the religious parties profit from domestic failures".²⁹

The emergence of the 'new world order' and rising religious and nationalist movements after the rapid transition of Eastern European countries, the collapse of Soviet-Union and the Gulf War have created new economic, political and social changes in the world. The overall impact of these recent international developments for Turkey has been a sudden and very visible increase in nationalism, and Islamic fundamentalism. In addition, the concessions made to the fundamentalists by the centre-right Motherland Party governments played an important role in easing the success of Islamic movements. In the aftermath of the military

²⁶. On the growth of Islam In Turkey, see Özalp Mehmet, *Islamic Identity and Development: Turkey and Malaysia*, London: Routledge, 1990; Binnaz Toprak, 'The Religious Right' in Irvin C. Schick and Ertugrul A. Tonak, *Turkey in Transition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 218-235.

²⁷. Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity*, London: Blackwell, 1997, p. 17.

²⁸. Gencay Saylan, 'The Enhancement of Democracy', *Turkey: Current Economic and Political Issues*, Conference, London School of Economics, 14 June 1995.

²⁹. Morton I. Abramowitz, 'Dateline Ankara: Turkey After Özal', *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1993, p.175.

regime, the MP combined religious, neo-liberal and nationalist elements under its roof and resided over numerous state-sanctioned policies with regard to building new mosques, opening religious lycees and lifting the ban on the organisation and mobilisation of religious activities:

"The governing elite used state power not merely to increase support for institutional religion or to advocate religious morality, but also to provide the framework in which religious activism could spread, independent of state support".³⁰

The previously minor radical political parties began to gain political support by leaps and bounds. The Welfare Party (WP), which challenges the established secular basis of republicanism and proposed to substitute it with an Islamic 'just order', a return to the glorious Ottoman past, and an anti-Western foreign policy that called for Islamic solidarity against the Zionist conspiracy of Israel and the US. The WP started to emerge as one of the major political forces in the early 1990s. Similarly, the Nationalist Activist Party (NAP) also gained political popularity since the beginning of the 1990s. This party supports a pan-Turkist foreign policy, and an ethnic nationalism for the population of Turkey. The upsurge of ethnic nationalism in the Balkans and Caucasus, and the increasing activities of the PKK in Turkey with the backing it received from the neighbouring countries and the Cold War allies of Turkey contributed to an overall cultural divide between those who identify themselves as Kurds and others in Turkey. This cultural rift started to grow with the death toll due to the post-Gulf War upsurge of the activities of the PKK in Northern Iraq and Turkey. The increasing perception of an ethnic divide between the Kurds and the Turks in Turkey further eased the NAP propaganda for an ethnic identification of the Turks. The NAP began to emerge as a political counter force to the PKK, and the Kurdish-Turkish social relations began to come under the influence of a war of Kurdish and Turkish chauvinists. Meanwhile,

³⁰. Yesim Arat, 'Social Change and the 1983 Governing Elite in Turkey', in Mübeccel Kiray (ed.) *Structural Change in Turkish Society*, Indiana University, Turkish Studies 10, 1991, p. 172.

the leftist movements and political parties appeared to have lost their public support since the military coup of 1980 and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Concomitant to these developments has been the increase in the number of Islamic publications and broadcasting channels. In 1994, 45 out of 96 private radio channels and 19 out of 71 private television channels were controlled by various Islamist groups and sects.³¹ Moreover, there were more than 400 Islamic publications all over the country.³² Islamist media argue that the attempts at Westernisation by Kemalists have caused an identity crisis by divorcing Turks from Islam. The kind of language they use, the literature and sources they refer to or analyse, the stance they adopt toward Westernism and secularism has greatly differed from the mainstream media.³³ Unlike the mainstream media, the radical Islamic press and broadcasting channels are against the promotion campaigns and their advertisement policy is to refuse alcoholic drinks manufacturers, banks and bankers commercials. Instead, Islamic publications have given to their readers copies of the Koran, Islamic books, even prayer-rugs with a compass and a clock calling for prayer. Some of them have supported the Islamist groups and political parties. For instance, *Milli Gazete* has long been the voice of the Welfare Party (WP). Although their circulation is not high, the influence they have on their readers has contributed to the overwhelming success of the WP in 1994 local and 1995 general elections.

On the other hand, the 'liberal' and 'secularist' media, namely major mainstream media companies support the principle of laicism and the Westernisation efforts of Turkey. Particularly after the 1980s, they have become cautious about criticising the liberal economic policies of the governments and have been in favour of privatisation as a result of their

³¹. *Hürriyet*, newspaper, 13.1.1994.

³². Metin Sever and Cem Dizdar, *İkinci Cumhuriyet Tartismalari (Second Republic Debates)*, Ankara: Basak Yayinlari, 1993.

³³. Michael E. Meeker, 'The New Muslim Intellectuals in the Republic of Turkey', in Richard Tapper (ed.) *Islam in Modern Turkey*, London: I.B. Taurus, 1991, pp. 189-219.

increased integration with business circles and economic interest groups. Moreover, mainstream media portray the Islamist groups as a potential threat to secularism. Therefore, they often receive criticism from the Islamic media as being the 'servants of the West' and ignoring the 'national and spiritual values' of Turkish society. However, the mainstream media are aware of the fact that 98% of the Turkish population is Muslim and, therefore, it can not afford to neglect the religion. During Ramadan, they distribute copies of the Koran and other religious books, and even send their readers to Mecca on a pilgrimage.³⁴ Large political or economic interests being at stake almost all newspapers except *Cumhuriyet* and few other left-wing publications appear to embrace religion enthusiastically.

Cumhuriyet has remained one of the alternative national dailies and has retained its commitment to serious and investigative journalism. Its ideology is based on anti-imperialist, leftist, egalitarian, unitarian, secularist principles. There are other national newspapers which are very critical of the policies of the state and support the growing Kurdish insurgency in South-eastern Anatolia like *Özgür Gündem*, *Özgür Ülke*, published in Turkish and other regional ones. These newspapers claim to be the only 'alternative' voice in Turkish media as they do not support the official ideology.³⁵ However, their circulation is low, for example *Özgür Gündem*'s is around 12.000. Despite the hostility of the state and the criticisms from the mainstream media that they openly support the PKK they are still published in Istanbul and sold in major news agents. There is also a Kurdish language satellite television, Med-TV, which is licenced by the Independent Television Commission in Britain, and it began its regular broadcasts on 15 May 1995 over Turkey, Europe, North Africa, Russian Federation and the Middle East. Since its inception, Turkish government associated this channel with the PKK, and pursued campaigns in European capitals to ban Med-TV.

³⁴. Orhan Kologlu, op.cit., 1992, p.103.

³⁵. Haluk Gerger, 'State and the Press', in *Devlet ve Basın* (State and the Press), Ankara: ÇGD (Contemporary Journalists Association) Publications, 1993, p. 40-45.

2.5. Commercialisation, Privatisation and Concentration

Post-1980 politics in Turkey was dominated by market-based ideologies. Economic factors have played an important role in transforming the mass media and the practices of journalism, which were, until the 1980s, predominantly determined by political and social agents. The structural changes in every domain of Turkish society and in Turkish media were not only the result of the sudden shift in the political scene in 1980 but the predestined rise and hegemony of major capital owners which was consolidated by the '24 January' economic operation and later '12 September' political intervention.

Following the economic policy decisions on 24 January, the increasing price of paper, which is still a state monopoly, and rising costs due to the transfer of new printing technologies have brought about great financial burden and huge profit losses to the press sector. This has forced major newspapers to seek new options to overcome the circulation crisis and to survive in the market. One of the outcomes of this was the increasing expenditure of press companies on advertisement campaigns. After the 1980s the press began to spend more than ever on television advertisements and promotion campaigns. Between 1985 and 1989 the press spent 102 billion Turkish Liras and increased their profits five times.³⁶ In the first seven months of 1992 three big newspapers; *Sabah*, *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet* spent in total 105 billion Turkish liras.³⁷ Moreover, in some newspapers half of the content has been allocated for advertisements.³⁸ Although the arrival of private television channels into the market was considered a new threat for the press, a few major national dailies managed to keep their position as one of the main advertisement media.³⁹ Another method of

³⁶. Orhan Kologlu, op.cit., 1992, p.87.

³⁷. Özgen Acar, 'Yaziyor!..Yaziyor!..', *Cumhuriyet*, newspaper, 31.8.1992.

³⁸. Orhan Kologlu, op.cit., 1992, p.89.

³⁹. See *Cumhuriyet*, newspaper, 18.8.1992 and *Aksam*, newspaper, 13.11.1994.

the newspapers to increase the circulation has become expensive promotion campaigns, which led to fierce competition between the major media companies. In 1992, newspapers spent 101 billion Turkish liras on 468 lotteries.⁴⁰

On the other hand, changing conditions in the economic and political environment in Turkey have been most detrimental to the leftist publications because they were no longer able to accumulate enough capital to sustain their publishing as their news policy did not please the marketing requirements of the advertisers. *Cumhuriyet*, the major national leftist daily faced the threat of closing down and finally had to make a declaration supporting the liberal economic policies. Another leftist paper, *Aydinlik* was saved from closing with the financial contributions from its readers. The defeat of leftist media was mainly due to the commercialisation of the Turkish press since the 1960s, with the concomitant rise in publishing costs, progressive transfer of ownership and control from the individual journalists to wealthy businessmen.

In spite of intensive advertisement and promotion campaigns, the press could not recover from its economic crisis and financial difficulties. Even the very tempting lottery campaigns were not enough to raise readership figures. Today, apart from *Cumhuriyet*, the leftist and the Islamist press, almost all national dailies have highly competitive promotion campaigns and spend billions of Turkish liras on television advertising. Moreover, the excessive dependency of the press on capital has increased the concentration of ownership. Some of the newspapers started to expand their business into other areas outside publishing ranging from banking and marketing to selling cars, televisions, videos etc. All major press groups are linked through cross ownership to interests outside the publishing business and have made high profits. The concentration of ownership led other publications to close down and to a war between different media groups. The integration of the news media into finance and industry has created conflicts of interest. It gave rise to no-go areas where newspapers

⁴⁰. Özgen Acar, op.cit., 1992.

were reluctant to investigate for fear of stepping on corporate toes. It also resulted sometimes in the newspapers' editorial columns being misused to promote the commercial interest of other companies in the same group. The ownership of newspapers thus became one strategy by which large business organizations sought to influence the environment in which they operated.

In the 1990s due to developments in communication technologies and social-economic changes in the society the political economy of Turkish news media has entered a new phase. The availability of new broadcasting technologies led to the discovery of a new market which was expected to be more profitable and therefore could rescue the newspapers still struggling in a vicious-circle. It was not only the Press which was interested in establishing broadcasting stations but also businessmen who own major local banks, marketing or export-import companies. Nezih Demirkent, ex-president of the Journalists Association and one of the leading columnists argues that "nowadays, one who carefully observes the position of any newspaper owner in the business world can guess which news will appear on which newspaper".⁴¹

Despite the wide-ranging privatisation of state economic enterprises during Özal's first government, the broadcasting system had remained state-owned. TRT, as Sahin and Aksoy points out:

"was essentially the voice of the state, the medium for the official definition and interpretation of the central Kemalist bureaucracy, that was conveyed to the people. Any challenges to the official ideology were thwarted by a multilevel system of self-censorship".⁴²

For two decades, television had appeared to be the 'official voice' of the subsequent civil and military governments. This has been challenged by the arrival of private television channels

⁴¹. Nezih Demirkent, *Dünya*, newspaper, 19 October, 1993.

⁴². Haluk Sahin and Asu Aksoy, 'Global Media and Cultural Identity in Turkey', *Journal of Communication*, 43(2), Spring, 1993.

in 1990s. It was in late 1989 that Özal declared that there was nothing illegal in broadcasting into Turkey from abroad, like CNN even though it was against the Constitution to establish private television stations in Turkey. A few months later the first private television channel, a company called Magic Box started beaming its experimental signals into Turkey from its transmitters located in Germany. One of the initial part-owners of this Swiss based company was Ahmet Özal, the elder son of Turgut Özal, then Prime Minister who later became the President. In a very short time its transmissions succeeded due to the transfer of terrestrial transmitters in 1990 from TRT to PTT and the interest of municipal authorities in satellite broadcasting technologies. Due to a disagreement between Özal and Cem Uzan, the other owner of the company, Star1 has continued its broadcasts under its current name, *InterStar* which belongs to Rumeli Holdings. Star was followed by other private channels which sent their broadcasts to Turkey via satellite links from Germany, France, and the UK. The private television channels have brought the issues which has already been discussed by the public and the press to the larger audience. Commenting on this, Sahin and Aksoy argued that:

"[t]he global stations operating outside the constraints of the official ideology helped turn Turkey into a shooting gallery of taboos by bringing the Kurdish problem, Kemalism, secularism, religious sects, gender roles sex, etc. into the realm of public discussion. Official "untouchables" like the leaders of pro-Soviet Communist Party, leaders of the Kurdish rebellion, fundamentalist preachers, transvestites, homosexuals, radical feminists and former secret service agents paraded through news magazines and talk shows".⁴³

Private television channels have been welcomed by different sections of the society for bringing an 'alternative' to the TRT. However, their strong ties with the business circles and major press companies led to growing commercialisation, conglomeration and new monopolies in the broadcasting sector. Since the late 1980s the mass media in Turkey have been becoming one of the foremost industrial and commercial organizations. The private

⁴³. *ibid.*

channels, too, have adopted similar economic trends, first they have had dealings with other larger industrial firms and second, their survival heavily depended on advertising. The advertising market in Turkey which used to depend on a few major newspapers and TRT expanded through the arrival of private radio and television stations.

As new communication technologies have developed the major media companies have invested great amounts of capital in new and sophisticated broadcasting technologies in order to be able to compete with their rivals and to secure their place in a growing market. The holding media companies tend to invest more in printing or broadcasting technologies and promotion of their companies. As being part of large business corporations holding media companies have made enormous expenditures on the construction and refurbishing of their new office buildings in İkitelli, a settlement almost 2 hours from the Babiali, which has been the centre of Turkish journalism throughout its history. The new location of Turkish media is designed to combine the printing and broadcasting facilities in one complex. Since almost all major press companies own private television channels, the new location of Turkish news media is designed to combine the printing and broadcasting facilities in one complex.

Today, there are five media giants that make up the top tier of the media companies in Turkey. These companies are prominent in more than one field and are becoming large-profit-seeking corporations. (Table 2.1.)⁴⁴ Their potential power and reach is greater now than any other time in the past due to the increasing conglomeration and the concentration of major media companies, which cause fears about the likely 'private monopolies'. The developments which led to the concentration in Turkish media sector, as Mustafa Sonmez argues, were the support of political parties and the state to the media, the growth in the sector as a result of promotion campaigns, the arrival of private television, the rapid growth

⁴⁴. It should be pointed out that the relationship between the major television companies, the press and the non-media business sectors are complex and constantly changing.

in Turkish economy between 1989 and 1993, the cross-ownership and merges between media companies and holdings, anti-trade-unionist personnel policies in the sector.⁴⁵

Table 2.1. The Conglomeration of the Turkish Media*

Major private TV companies	Selected other media interests and affiliations	Owner(s)	Selected non-media interests and affiliations
SHOW TV	Cine 5 (cable TV), Show Radio, Alo Show, Marie Claire	Erol Aksoy	Iktisat Bank, insurance, finance, marketing, printing,
KANAL D	Milliyet, Hürriyet, Radikal, Meydan, Posta, (national dailies); Spor, Ekonomist Capital (magazines); Radio Club, Hür Radio, Hürriyet TV, Aks TV, Hürriyet News Agency	Dogan Holdings	Dis Bank, Bank Express, Insurance, finance, tourism, and other industrial sectors
ATV	Satel TV; Sabah, Yeni Asir, Yeni Yuzyl, Takvim, Bugun, Fotomac (newspapers), Aktüel (weekly magazine)	Bilgin Family Medya Holdings	Endüstri Holdings Çukurova Holdings, Pamukbank, Y. Kredi Bank
STAR	Kral TV, various weekly magazines	Uzan Family, Rumeli Holdings	Ada Bank, Imar Bank, Telecommunication and security systems business
TGRT	Ihlas News Agency, TGRT FM, Türkiye (newspaper), various weekly magazines	Ihlas Holdings	Egebank, Yurtbank, Publishing, Construction, car engine, marketing business

*Sources: derived from daily newspapers (*Milliyet*, 4/ 6.11.1993; *Cumhuriyet*, 17.11.1993; *Milliyet*, 28.10.1995); Halil Nebiler, *Medyanin Ekonomi Politigi, (The Political Economy of the Media)*, Istanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1995, and Mustafa Sönmez, *Türk Medya Sektöründe Yogunlasma ve Sonuçları (Concentration in Turkish Media Sector, and its Consequences)*, *Birikim*, Istanbul, 1996, pp.76-86.

⁴⁵. Mustafa Sönmez, 'Türk Medya Sektöründe Yogunlasma ve Sonuçları' (Concentration in Turkish Media Sector, and its Consequences), *Birikim*, Istanbul, 1996, pp.76-86.

The rapid rise of private media and the integration of the media with the dominant economic sectors has also changed the nature of the relationship between the media, the state, and the market. There is little evidence and source on the extent of the relationship between these three dominant institutions of society in Turkey. However, it is known that media companies have received large sums of state subsidies. In 1991 and 1992 the Treasury and Foreign Trade Secretary gave subsidies which amounted to over 3 billion Turkish liras.⁴⁶ Moreover some media companies were given loans with low interest rates and they were also exempted from paying custom duties and had concessions in other taxes. The major press companies, particularly *Milliyet*, *Hürriyet* and *Sabah* received the lion's share. During the time of the Motherland Party government, particularly *Star* television channel received generous subsidies from the government.⁴⁷ This has started the so-called 'media wars' between the media companies which received subsidies from the present government and the ones subsidised by the previous MP government. The opportunities provided by the state and the large sums of state subsidies poured by the governments into major media companies have sometimes determined the degree and intensity of the media's criticisms of governments.

Turkey's two media giants, the Dogan and Medi groups, had most to fear since they control 71% of newspaper sales and own a television station apiece. Neither had hidden its antipathy to the WP. The two principal Dogan Holdings dailies, *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet*, annoyed Tansu Çiller by giving generous coverage to the corruption allegations against her. Hours after taking office on 28 June 1996, the coalition government of the TPP and the WP issued a decree severely restricting the lavish promotion campaigns used by newspapers to

⁴⁶ *Basin Güncesi (The Dairy of The Press)*, Ankara: ÇGD (Contemporary Journalists Association) Publications, June 1994, pp. 98-99.

⁴⁷ During its first years *Star* received 3 million 397 thousands' state subsidy, 1 million 198 thousands' technology aid from the then MP government and it was also provided hundred percent custom duties reductions. See Hülya Yengin, *Ekranın Büyüsü (The Magic of the Screen)*, İstanbul: Der Yayinlari, 1994, p.122.

drum up their circulation. Rather than enticing readers by giving away cars, newspapers could now offer them only 'cultural material' such as books and encyclopedias. The effect was immediate. Dogan Media Group's principal 'promotion-based' newspaper, *Posta*, saw its circulation slump from a peak of 700.000 to less than 200.000. However, as was the case in the past large media groups found a way of getting round to this legal inconvenience by introducing new papers, usually containing couple of pages for marketing some consumer products and kitchen appliances.

2.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to explain the impact of historical, political, social and economic factors on the development of journalism in Turkey. Throughout its history, the Turkish press has suffered from political interventions which restricted its freedom and pluralism. Moreover, due to the anxieties caused by economic pressures, it has not always been able to fully accomplish its function of being a public service mechanism to observe and to criticise the state though there was a considerable room for criticism of the government of the day. Political pressures on journalists during the different time periods since the appearance of the first newspaper in 1831 have been the main external influence on the press. The political restrictions and legal changes implemented by the 1980 military government meant greater control over the press and set more limits on journalists' autonomy. The market-based economic policies of the centre-right Motherland Party governments of the 1980s started a process in which economic pressures on the news media appeared to become as important as political factors. The deteriorating economic situation in the early 1980 onwards has brought about circulation losses not only for the political newspapers but also for the main dailies. The result was the growing commercialisation in the press sector, which led to the increasing dependency of the newspapers on advertising revenue. Moreover, in order to increase their sales newspapers launched expensive promotion campaigns. The changing political climate of the early 1990s in which the Kurdish insurgency in south east

Anatolia, the rise of political Islam, and the decline of the left emerged as the main issues influential on the media as well as on other social institutions of Turkish society. Furthermore, the privatisation and conglomeration of broadcasting in the 1990s have created problems. The mass media field in Turkey has come to be dominated by a handful of media enterprises.

CHAPTER 3: Legal, Organisational and Professional Context

The nature of the work journalists perform, their beliefs and political preferences, are influenced by the changes in political and economic climate of the different time periods that the society is passing through. These influences are translated into the laws according to which the society is governed and organised, and also the regulations concerning the mass media. Just as important are the structure, broadcasting and programme policies of the organisations journalists work for, and the way that the journalistic workforce is organised, controlled and trained. They all impinge upon the production and the content of the news.

However, the level of economic development and democracy may alter the extent and the intensity of these effects. Turkey, like many developing countries, is both politically and economically less stable and the relationship between the state, the dominant political elite and the economic sector is relatively less transparent than that in the developed countries. News production and journalists are under extensive political constraints and economic pressures. Even the privately owned media hesitate to transgress beyond the boundaries and to offend the political establishment. By bearing possible threats to their jobs and status in mind, journalists, working in public or private media companies are likely to apply more self-censorship than their Western counterparts working in a more tolerant environment.

The present chapter discusses the legal, organisational and professional issues influencing the practices of the journalists in Turkey. By examining the major legal documents, I will attempt to explain the legal and political pressures that the news media and the journalists in Turkey have to encounter in producing the news. This will be followed by an investigation of how the organisational and professional factors affect the work and the professional values of the Turkish journalists. The remaining part of the chapter deals with the central issues around the present state of the education and training of the Turkish journalists at professional and academic level.

3.1. Legal Framework of Journalism and News Media

In liberal societies press and broadcasting freedom are considered important values. However, governments exert controls over private media, through laws, regulations, licences and taxes, and over state-run media through licence fees or direct subsidies. The editorial freedom of government-owned, and private television cannot be considered in isolation from the larger legal framework for freedom of press and speech. Thus, before looking at the regulation of the audio-visual media it is necessary to understand how the freedom of expression and press are arranged in the Constitution and in other laws. I will, then, examine the legislative framework of public service, and private broadcasting. In the meantime, I will mention some cases which are important in terms of showing the extent of legal pressures on the news media and journalists.

3.1.1. Press Freedom

The general framework for the freedoms of press and expression are drawn by the 1982 Constitution. Article 28 of the 1982 Constitution acknowledges that "the press is free and shall not be censored", and also that "the state shall take the necessary measures to ensure the freedom of press and information".¹ Compared to the 1961 Constitution, however, it provides less liberal framework for the socio-economic and individual rights, including the freedom of press. There are a number of provisions which make it an offence to write or print "any news or articles which threaten the internal or external security of the State or the indivisible integrity of the State with its territory and nation, which tend to incite offence, riot or insurrection, or which refer to classified State secrets".² In this way, the Constitution defines the situations in which freedom of press can be limited. Moreover, it authorises the administration while diminishing the power of the judiciary in dealing with the offences committed by the press.

¹. 1982 *Anayasasi (The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, 1982)*, published by the Directorate General of Press and Information, Ankara, 1982.

². *ibid.*

Similarly, although Article 31 of the 1982 Constitution forbids "restrictions preventing the public from receiving information or forming ideas and opinions" through the mass media other than the press, Article 13 sets out a large area in which "fundamental rights and freedoms may be restricted by law."³ Article 13 allows legal constraints "with the aim of safeguarding the indivisible integrity of the State with its territory and nation, national sovereignty, the Republic, national security, public order, general peace, the public interest, public morals and public health".⁴ Moreover, Article 26 restricts the right of expression and dissemination of thought and opinion for "preventing crime, punishing offenders, withholding information duly classified as a State secret, protecting the reputation and rights and the private and family life of others, or protecting professional secrets".⁵ These statements and restrictions have been criticised by the journalists for being 'vague', 'arbitrary' and 'imprecise'.⁶ These restrictions are also phrased in a number of laws. The freedom of expression and the freedom of press are arranged in 700 articles of 150 laws as well as by the Constitution itself.⁷ Among these laws are the Anti-Terrorism Law, the Penal Code, the Civil Law, the Police Law, the Law on the Protection of Minors From Harmful Publications, the Law on the Employers And the Employees in Press, which are considered by the journalism associations to be restrictive in terms of press freedom in Turkey.

One of the most important pieces of legislation concerning press freedom is the Press Law No: 5680 which was accepted in 1950. Although this law is prepared and enacted with the aim of ensuring the freedom of the press and providing a legal

³. *ibid.*

⁴. *ibid.*

⁵. *ibid.*

⁶. *Basin Kurultayı 1992 (Press Congress 1992)*, Ankara: ÇGD (Contemporary Journalists Association) Publications, 1993, pp.256-268.

⁷. Çagdas Gazeteciler Derneği (Contemporary Journalists Association), *Ifade Özgürlüğü Hapiste (The Freedom of Expression is in the Prison)*, Ankara: ÇGD Publications, 1994, p. vi.

framework for its activities it does not meet the needs of the present day. After the 1980 military coup the government has amended some of its articles and added new provisions to this law imposing political and economic limitations on the free circulation of information, opinions and beliefs. One of the most criticised provisions of the Press Law is Article 31 which authorises the administration, almost without the obligation of giving any reason, to ban the import of foreign publications. Critics argue that if the public are able to follow foreign radio stations and television channels they should have the right to do so for foreign publications as well. Moreover, it is found incongruous that while printed matter in Turkey can only be banned by a judicial order, foreign publications are liable to interdiction by an administrative decision.

Additional articles, adopted by the military regime on 10 November, 1983 have brought about more constraints on the press. Article 1 authorises the administration or the judiciary to prevent the distribution of printed works on the grounds that an offence has been committed and to confiscate the tools that have been used in their printing. By this article it is intended to ensure that the distribution of printed material can be obstructed either by laying hand on it at the printing shop or taking it back from the distributors. For this to take place a simple complaint or denunciation to the effect that the printed material constitutes one of the crimes mentioned in the additional Article 1 is sufficient. Therefore, in the 1992 Press Congress organised by the Contemporary Journalists Association it is considered to be against the freedom of press as well against the basic human right of having access to information.⁸ Moreover, section two of the same article authorises the seizure of publications against which criminal investigation and proceedings have been started on the charge that enumerated crimes have been committed. However, the crimes justifying the seizure of the publications are defined in a vague way that it includes great variety of actions and thus the prosecutor is empowered to ban all sorts of publications, no matter how unconvincingly connected with the offences in question. Another article, which has been objected by the journalists is the additional 2 which states that, "in case of

⁸. *ibid.*

condemnation on account of crimes mentioned in section 3 of the additional Article 1, and of the acts against national security and public morality, the periodical containing the incriminated writings may be banned for a period of from three days at the least to one month at the most".⁹

The change of the controversial articles of the Penal Code on offences concerning communist and religious fundamentalist activities had been considered an important step in relaxing the pressures on the freedom of expression and press. However, a new law, which was proposed in 1991 by the Motherland Party government aimed "to replace the removed articles of the Penal Code, except Article 163, which deals with the religious activities".¹⁰ With the enactment of the Anti-Terrorism Law by the Parliament in April 1991 new restrictions on the freedom of expression came into force. Some journalists called it 'Anti-Press Law'.¹¹ After long debates in the parliament and between the SDPP and the TPP, the partners of the then coalition government it was changed and approved by the parliament in 1994. The SDPP demanded that the offences committed against the secular nature of the state must be included in the law. However, this was not welcomed by the conservative and religious political parties or by the Islamist media, and the fundamentalist activities were not worded in the Anti-Terrorism Law. Oral Çalışlar argued that "with the Anti-Terrorism Law, making propaganda and establishing or joining fundamentalist Islamic organisations with the aim of changing the 'laïque' structure of the state will not be crimes any more."¹²

A recent survey in the press sector showed that 35% of the journalists consider the relative provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Law are some of the most important

⁹. Alpay Kabacalı, *Türkiye'de Basın Sansürü (Press Censor in Turkey)*, Istanbul: Journalist Association Publications, 1990, p. 226.

¹⁰. Oral Çalışlar, 'Terörle Mücadele Yasası' (Anti-Terrorism Law), *Cumhuriyet*, 19.12.1994.

¹¹. *Yeni Yüzyıl*, 24.12.1994 and *Cumhuriyet*, 17.11.1993.

¹². *ibid.*

obstacles in collecting and producing the news.¹³ Particularly articles 6, 7, and 8 of the law are considered the most anti-democratic. Article 6 punishes acts tending to disclose intentions of terrorist organisations to commit crimes against persons whose identity is intimated or to disclose the identity of public officials taking part in the fight against terrorism with the purpose of showing them as targets, and also printing and publishing the announcements of terrorist organisations. Article 7 states that making propaganda in favour of terrorist organisations is an offence. Article 8 punishes all sorts of propaganda aimed at violating the territorial integrity and indivisibility and the national unity of the State. The last point attracted criticisms not only in the country but also in European parliament which required Turkey to abolish this article if it is wished to be part of the EU. More than a hundred journalists, politicians, intellectuals and writers have been arrested and prosecuted for violating Article 8. Most of them have spoken out on the issue of cultural and political rights for Turkey's Kurdish population. In October 1995 the Turkish parliament voted to amend, rather than eliminate, Article 8 of the Anti-Terrorism law.¹⁴ The law still reads that it is a crime to make written or verbal propaganda and to stage rallies or demonstrations with aim of violating the 'indivisible unity of the Turkish state', but the proviso 'regardless of what method, intent or consideration' was removed.¹⁵ The amended article reduces the punishment for violating Article 8, and allows the court to use their discretion to postpone jail terms or to convert them into fines.

In addition to these restrictions there are other and more serious forms of political pressure on the freedom of press in Turkey. The same survey showed also that 29.5% of the journalists agreed on the threat posed by the open and secret state organisations. Moreover, 17.5% of the journalists said that they feel intimidated by the 'terrorist organisations'.¹⁶ Reports produced by the Turkish journalist associations, and by the

¹³. Orhan Bursali, 'Arastirma/Anket: Gazeteciler Haber ve Yorumlarini Yazarken Ne kadar Özgürler? (How Free Are the Journalists When They Are Producing the News?)', *Cumhuriyet*, 6.7.1996 and 5.7.1996.

¹⁴. *Guardian*, 28.10.1995.

¹⁵. *The Economist Intelligence Unit's Report on Turkey*, 1st quarter 1996 p.14.

¹⁶. *ibid.*

international organisations, such as the International Federation of Journalists, Amnesty International and Reporters Sans Frontiers confirm that the freedom of collecting and transmitting news and information is under a serious threat in Turkey.¹⁷ A report by *The Economist* in 1996 stated that Turkey is the third in the list of countries where journalists are repressed most.¹⁸ Correspondents have been the victims of threats, repression and physical violence posed by the state security forces, the right-wing paramilitary groups and the mafia, and also by the armed militant organisations, namely the PKK (Kurdistan Worker's Party) and radical fundamentalist Islamic groups. Several journalists were detained and killed by the PKK, which since October 1993 has banned Turkish journalists from the territory it controls in southeast Turkey. The assassination of Ugur Mumcu in January 1992, who was one of the most prominent investigative journalists in Turkey raised many questions over the relationship between the Turkish intelligentsia, CIA, the PKK, Hizbullah and the Mafia.¹⁹ However, Mumcu's killing has become one of the 'unsolved murder' cases in Turkey, causing great stress, and bitterness among journalists and the public.

Since 1991, 399 journalists have been arrested, 149 were prosecuted, 221 have been imprisoned or fined, 23 were killed, and some newspaper and television channel buildings were attacked and bombed.²⁰ Only in 1996 sixty-six journalists have been jailed, most for 'fostering separatism' by supporting the Kurdish minority. Reporting on the meetings organised by trade unions, students or families of the prisoners and funerals

¹⁷. According to the IFJ's report in 1993 Turkey was one the five countries where the journalists were killed most. Others were Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia, Algeria and Georgia. See Çağdas Gazeteciler Dernegi (Contemporary Journalists Association), *Ifade Özgürlüğü Hapiste (The Freedom of Expression is in the Prison)*, Ankara: ÇGD Publications, 1994; *Reporters Sans Frontiers: 1995 Report*, London: John Libbey, 1995.

¹⁸. Milliyet, 17.7.1996

¹⁹. Çağdas Gazeteciler Dernegi (Contemporary Journalists Association), *Ugur Mumcu'ya Armagan (A Tribute to Ugur Mumcu)* Ankara: ÇGD Publications, 1994

²⁰. These figures are derived from the reports and publications by the Contemporary Journalists Association, and the Press Council in Turkey, and Reporters Sans Frontiers in 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995.

of the people killed by the security forces has become the most hazardous work for the journalists. In January 1996, a journalist who was following a funeral was arrested, and died in police custody, leading to national and international campaigns to prosecute the members of the police who were responsible for the killing. The repressive approach of the police towards journalists causes great tension and worry among the journalists and poses a serious threat to the freedom of information and, more importantly, to the lives of the journalists:

"Being a reporter is enough to be targeted by the police. Journalists become the first target in a demonstration. The police had given us press-bands to separate us from the demonstrators. Some journalists did not want wear them because they thought this was a kind of tactic to spot us more easily in the crowd. This was a trick. Our lives are under constant threat. Our future is not secure. How can we be expected to make objective and accurate news?"²¹

A recent incident was perhaps the last straw in the increasing tension between the journalists and the police. Journalists, who were following the demonstration organised by the families of the detainees in Istanbul were attacked and their cameras were taken by the police. When they took refuge in the Turkish Journalists Association building they were chased and dragged out by the police. Many, including 43 journalists' associations, opposition parties and trade unions fiercely reacted to this event and criticised the government for "targeting the journalists as its enemy".²²

In November 1996 the Turkish parliament debated a new press freedom legislation proposed by the WP and the TPP coalition government. Under the new bill the government proposed that "false news or lies against the political or financial prestige of the state" and that "false news which could create an emotion and provocation" will be curbed and prosecuted. These statements caused a great deal of criticism from the media. Many newspapers and television channels in the country argue that the new regulation

²¹. Star's journalists, recorded interviews, 15.7.1994.

²². *Hürriyet*, 10.7.1996 and *Milliyet*, 17.7.1996.

aims to curb anti-government news reports and call it 'censorship law'. A media lecturer and journalist Ragip Duran argued that these statements are "loose, open to various interpretations and too broad".²³ The Turkish media claim that the planned bill was set down to suppress or punish the journalists who have been investigating the allegations about the Çiller's and the WP's Bosnian aid appeal scandal.²⁴ It has been claimed that Tansu Ciller accumulated enormous amount of affluence when she was in power through allocation of state resources in her husband's business. The WP, on the other hand, was accused of using the aid, collected from Turkish public in the name of helping Bosnian Muslims, for financing its political activities.²⁵

According to a public opinion survey published in *Hürriyet* about the proposed Press Law, 60% of Turkish people are against the new bill while 22% approve it. Moreover, when people were asked about the aim of the new bill 42% said that it is designed to prevent press criticism of the government, 24% to prevent the press from dealing with corruption, 23% to make the press provide true news, and 5% said that it is to stop the press attacking the private lives and rights of people.²⁶

3.1.2. Broadcasting Freedom

At present, news broadcasting and the work of broadcast journalists in Turkey are subject to two different legal arrangements. Journalists who work for TRT are obliged to work within the framework drawn by the TRT Law No: 2954 which was accepted in 1983 following the 1980 military coup and the 1982 Constitution. However, it should be pointed out that freedoms set out in the 1982 Constitution and also in other laws apply to the audio-visual media as well as to the press.

²³. Ragip Duran, interview on BBC World Service Radio, 19.11.1996.

²⁴. *Milliyet*, 19.11.1996.

²⁵. For detailed information on these events see Chapter 5 and Chapter 6

²⁶. *Hürriyet*, 22.11.1996.

In the previous law on the radio and television broadcasting in Turkey, TRT's status had been described as an "autonomous public juridical person".²⁷ This was as a consequence of reactions to the events in the late 1950s during which radio news programmes consisted largely of the activities and political propaganda of the then ruling party the DP. Thus, by granting TRT this status the 1960 military regime aimed to prevent the organisation from direct political interference. However, the principle of autonomy caused controversies and conflicts. The Justice Party government which came to power in 1966, had inherited the political philosophy of the DP. It started accusing TRT of having a leftist bias in its programmes and wanted to exert pressures on the organisation by refusing to increase licence fees. Finally, with the 1971 military memorandum the 'autonomus' status of TRT was altered to 'impartial' and the general-director of the corporation was replaced by a three-star general. The military government claimed that the autonomous public institutions undermined the government's authority, and therefore particularly liberal provisions of the 1961 Constitution needed to be changed because they permitted extreme views to use constitutional guarantees in order to weaken the Constitution itself.²⁸ Haluk Sahin argues that the fall of TRT's autonomy was a consequence of "socio-political environment and traditions rather than legal weaknesses".²⁹ From 1972 to 1980, seven director-generals took office as the governments of different political persuasion have frequently replaced one another. Each change was followed by large scale of purges, primarily on partisan grounds particularly among the production and administrative staff.

The chaotic political atmosphere of the late 1970s' Turkey led to another coup d'etat in September 1980. As happened with other military interventions a new

²⁷. *Türkiye Radyo-Televizyon Kurumu Kanunu No:359 (TRT Law No:359)*, published in Official Newspaper, No. 11596, 24 December 1964.

²⁸. Emre Kongar, *Türkiye'nin Toplumsal Yapisi (The Social Structure of Turkey)*, Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1981.

²⁹. Haluk Sahin, 'Broadcasting Autonomy in Turkey: Its Rise and Fall-1961-1971', *Journalism Quarterly*, Autumn, 1981, pp. 395-400.

constitution was prepared and finally accepted in 1982 by a referendum. Article 133 of the 1982 constitution stated that "radio and television stations shall be established only by the State, and shall be administered by an impartial public corporate body".³⁰ In accordance with this statement, TRT's legal structure was changed once more by a new law, approved on 11 November 1983. The establishment of the Radio and Television High Council under the new law was one of the most important changes. Its members were to be appointed by the President. Its main functions were to determine broadcasting principles in conformity with national policy for domestic radio and television programmes, to supervise, and to control the exercise of the functions and principals laid down by the Law, and to grant licences for the cable television operating in the country.³¹ The members of the Administrative Council, the highest rank in TRT's governing hierarchy and the Director-General were nominated by the Radio and Television Supreme Council and appointed by the Cabinet. With this law the Director-General was given extensive powers in deciding other executive staff and programming policy of the institution. With the abolition of the licence fee system in 1985 TRT lost an important part of its source of income and have become dependent largely on the revenue derived from the television commercials. Law No: 2954 provided also the opportunity for the government to present its activities in radio and television programmes. These programmes would be prepared outside TRT and would be transmitted separately from the news programmes. However, these programmes have resulted in political propaganda rather than informing the public opinion about the government's activities. The opposition parties and some pressure groups criticised this specific clause of the Law because it did not provide a similar access to them.

The arrival of private television on Turkish broadcasting scene resulted in complete chaos in terms of technical and judicial matters. For almost three years private

³⁰. *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti 1982 Anayasası (Turkish Republic 1982 Constitution)*.

³¹. *Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kanunu No:2954 (Turkish Radio and Television Law No:2954)*, published in Official newspaper, No. 18221, 14 November 1983.

channels used satellite signals, beamed from various European countries, and their broadcasts were illegal. On 8 July 1993, the state monopoly on broadcasting was abolished. The amended article of the 1982 Constitution states that "[i]nstallation and operation of radio and television stations shall be free under conditions to be established by law."³² However, despite the abolition of the state monopoly private channels continued their operation without a legal recognition. After long debates in the parliament and in the media, on 13 April 1994 the political parties approved the new broadcasting Law No: 3984. This law organises and regulates the establishment and broadcasts of private television and radio channels. Its provisions are inspired by the general framework of the 1982 Constitution. The protection of the national security and the public order, and the prevention of crime are the main principles that the private media organisations are required to observe in their programmes.

It has been argued that the Supreme Council would restrict the editorial freedom of private broadcast media organisations because of the way it is structured and funded. The Supreme Council is composed of nine members. Five of these members are chosen by the Parliament from among the ten candidates nominated by the government. The rest of its members are named from among eight candidates proposed by the opposition parties. The representatives from other democratic institutions and pressure groups were excluded in this process. Altan Öymen, one of the prominent journalist-columnist on *Milliyet* commented that this might create a radio and television system ruled by the "oligarchy of political parties".³³ The funding of the Supreme Council raised one other important question on the Law No: 3984, which requires that TRT and private radio and television stations pay 5% of their monthly advertising revenues to the Council.³⁴

³². *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti 1982 Anayasası (Turkish Republic 1982 Constitution)*, Addendum, July 1993.

³³. Altan Öymen, 'Partiler Oligarsisi mi?' (Is this Oligarchy of the Political Parties?), *Milliyet*, 17 April 1993.

³⁴. *Radio ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu'nun Çalışma Esas ve Usulleri Hakkında Yönetmelik (The Regulation on the Working Principles and Methods of the Radio and Television Supreme Council)*, published in Official Newspaper, No. 22117, 20 November 1994.

Some provisions of this law were objected to by some political parties, pressure groups and also private broadcasters in Turkey. Under the new legislation, the prime minister or the minister he or she appoints is given the right to ban a specific broadcast if it is considered as a threat to national security and public order.³⁵ Thus, the new law has been fiercely criticised as it would put more political pressure on broadcasters, and bring government censorship. Some described it as "the most undemocratic law in recent years".³⁶ In addition, one of the other most criticised aspects of the new legal framework for private television was that it did not include 'secularism' in the main broadcasting principles. This was objected to by the leftist political parties, and some journalists. Oktay Eksi, the president of the Press Council and leading columnist on *Hürriyet* warned that this may lead to a situation that the programmes disseminating religious fundamentalist ideology would be tolerated "if the members of the Supreme Council are formed by conservative religious cadres."³⁷ One other controversial provision in the new law was Clause 29 which does not allow political parties, associations, trade unions, trusts, local governments, cooperatives, trade chambers, financial institutions to establish, and to be in partnership with radio and television channels. This article was strongly opposed by, particularly, the representatives of trade unions. Süleyman Çelebi, the General-Secretary of the DISK, the left-wing trade union argued that "while the capital owners are granted the right to establish radio and television channels the labour organisations are denied, let alone to have the same right, even to be associated with the broadcasting organisations."³⁸ Moreover, some critics expressed their reservation about the proviso on the language of

³⁵. *Radyo ve Televizyonların Kuruluş ve Yayınları Hakkında Kanun No:3984 (The Law on the Establishment and Broadcasts of Radio and Television Stations No:3984)*, published in Official Newspaper, No:21911, 20 April, 1994.

³⁶. Ertugrul Özkök, 'Zapping Hürriyetimi Gaspetmeyin' (Don't Usurp My Zapping Freedom), *Hürriyet*, 16 November 1993.

³⁷. Oktay Eksi, 'Radyo ve Tv'lerde Yeni Dönem (A New Era for Radio and Tv)', *Hürriyet*, 20.4.1994.

³⁸. *Milliyet*, 19.4.1994.

broadcasts which requires all broadcasts to be in Turkish. Oktay Eksi argued that this statement is "inconvenient and restrictive for communication freedom".³⁹

Despite the negative criticisms the new law attracted from different circles it was, however, considered a crucial step in terms of bringing some definition and control to the practices of the commercial broadcasting channels. Particularly Article 28 was welcomed on the grounds that it would dissuade broadcasting stations from invading privacy and the unfair treatment of individuals and organisations involved in specific incidents. Since the arrival of private television in Turkey there have been number of complaints from the public, the political parties and other institutions on the violations of individual's right to privacy, and on the strong attacks on some people and bodies carried out by the private channels. Thus, the new law aimed to provide individuals and organisations with rights of reply to the allegations made in the factual programmes on the broadcasting media.

However, it should be pointed out also that it is not only the Law No: 3984 which arranges the practices of broadcast journalists but other laws concerning sensitive issues, such as 'national security'. Journalists and producers from various private broadcasting organisations were subject to the much broader legal sanctions and political pressures, which have been mentioned in the earlier section. For example, two producer-journalists from HBB, Erhan Akyildiz and Ali Tevfik Berber were taken to the Military Court because their programme, *Antenna* on 8 December 1993 broadcast the interviews with members of the Anti-War Association, which, was interpreted by the authorities as disseminating anti-military feeling among Turkish people.⁴⁰ Article 155 of the Penal Code allows civilians to be tried by military courts for 'incitement to criticisms of military service'. Commenting on his arrest Erhan Akyildiz said that "[t]his procedure had not been used for 40 years. What's more, I was sentenced as the programme producer, not for

³⁹. Oktay Eksi, op.cit.

⁴⁰. See Çağdas Gazeteciler Derneği (Contemporary Journalists Association), *Ifade Özgürlüğü Hapiste (The Freedom of Expression is in the Prison)*, Ankara: ÇGD Publications, 1994, p. 49, and *Hürriyet*, 16 December, 1993.

what I said myself but for what I allowed other people to say. In other words, a crime of speech through a third party."⁴¹

One other case was the arrest of Mehmet Ali Birand, a prominent journalist and producer of 32nd day, who interviewed Osman Öcalan, one of the leading men in the PKK and the brother of its leader, Abdullah Öcalan.⁴² These instances showed that despite an increase in the number of controversial topics in news and current affairs programmes, like the Kurdish insurgency, Islamic fundamentalism, human rights abuses there are still no go areas for the journalists in Turkey, particularly when the Army and its operations in the southeast Anatolia are concerned:

"We cannot make critical news about the state and the army. If we want to report on state terrorism or human rights abuses we have to be very careful and cautious because of the fear that the Radio Television Supreme Council might give our organisation a warning."⁴³

The legal and political pressures on the news media concerning sensitive issues created a situation where journalists avoid any trouble even at the expense of not informing the public on the important events and issues. Andrew Mango, writer and ex-head of the Turkish Section in the BBC World Service argued that "Turkish news media provides variety of opinions but not accurate information".⁴⁴ Ragip Duran made similar points that the Turkish media "do not inform but form the public opinion" about the Kurdish issue and the war in the southeast Turkey between the Turkish army and the PKK.⁴⁵

As with every change in government new legal and political pressures have seemed to follow previous ones. A new provision was accepted in the parliament in

⁴¹. *Reporters Sans Frontiers: 1995 Report*, London: John Libbey, 1995, p. 179.

⁴². *Hürriyet*, 12 December, 1994.

⁴³. Kanal D's journalist, recorded interview, 26.12.1994.

⁴⁴. Andrew Mango, *Conference on Media and Democracy*, Anglo-Turkish Association, London, 20.11.1995.

⁴⁵. Ragip Duran, op.cit.

October 1995, which allows courts to shut down for up to 15 days radio and television stations that make broadcasts judged to be propaganda. In August 1996 the Radio Television Supreme Council, whose majority of the members are formed by the ruling parties, the Welfare Party and the True Path Party, ordered Kanal D to suspend its operations for a day because of its 'insulting analysis' of the coalition's formation in June 1996.⁴⁶ In the meantime, the Islamist prime minister Necmettin Erbakan used Clause 25, which allows government censorship to block a television report on conditions in a hunger strikers's prison before it went on air.⁴⁷

3.2. Organisational Pressures

The characteristics of the news organisations have significant effects on the news production. The nature of the ownership, the source of revenue, and the political preferences of the media organisations play crucial role in forming the structure and the presentation of news and current affairs programmes. Journalists work under considerable organisational control and they are not free to practice their profession independent of the institutional forces. It should, however, be pointed out that journalists in state-owned media are subject to different organisational pressures than journalists in private media.

3.2.1. Autonomy, Impartiality and TRT's Journalists

One of the most serious criticisms and complaints about TRT's news reporting and journalistic practices has been about its lack of autonomy and its subordinate position in relation to the political establishment. Despite the outcry of TRT's producers and journalists for the return of political, financial and organisational independence, and the constitutional amendment in 1993, which acknowledged TRT's autonomous status the structure of TRT has not changed. This is mainly because of the fact that TRT still has to observe the principles stated in the Law No: 2954 which has remained unchanged since

⁴⁶ *Hürriyet*, 21.7.1996

⁴⁷ Cengiz Semercioglu, 'Çözüm Sansür mü? (Is Censorship A Solution?) *Hürriyet*, 18.7.1996.

its first enactment in 1983. Although a considerable proportion of TRT's income is derived from commercials, TRT's news and programming policy seems to be influenced by the demands of the political elites rather than the expectations of the audience and the advertisers. At the centre of these pressures is TRT's News Department since the news programmes are perceived by the government as the main channels of official information that it can deliver to the public. Thus, TRT's journalists are not in a position to enjoy a great deal of independence from the government. Some TRT journalists argue that unless this law is changed the management and the journalists of TRT have little power to restore the autonomy and impartiality of the institution. Unlike their counterparts, for example, in the BBC or in the commercial media, TRT's journalists do not have an independent professional identity. As one TRT journalist argued, this has a negative effect on the journalists' relations with their news sources:

"When we deal with news events concerning the state the bureaucrats do not see us as journalists. They treat us as if we are civil servants working for them. When we ask a controversial question on the state affairs they say that 'you work for the state, so how dare you ask such questions?' And unfortunately, they have the right to say so as long as the TRT's legal status remains unchanged."⁴⁸

Another most important organisational effect on the journalists results from the structure of TRT, which is highly centralist. The Head of News Department at TRT seems to be in charge of almost everything. With the fear of missing anything which might offend the government, he reads, checks and edits almost every news item produced by the journalists. Being aware of this fact, TRT journalists are cautious when collecting and producing the news stories. This creates a resentment among some journalists who think that they are not trusted by the management however experienced they are.

⁴⁸. TRT journalist, recorded interview, 6.1.1995.

3.2.2. Control, Self-Censorship and Journalists in Private Channels

With the large amount of capital transfer from the business sectors into the Turkish media, the structure of ownership has changed. In the past media proprietors were usually journalists. However, today, the major television channels are owned and controlled by the business-oriented individual entrepreneurs who have companies, shares and investments in other competitive business and industrial sectors. The survival and the profitability of their companies are their highest priority. Other goals, such as the production of a quality product, service the public, and the achievement of professional recognition are built into this overreaching economic objective. In the selection and production of the news events the audience appeal, which translates into higher ratings, producing greater advertising revenue has a paramount importance. Journalists in private organisations operate in these highly competitive corporate structures. Compared to TRT's journalists they work in politically more relaxed organisational environments. However, they are autonomous only as long as they do not impinge upon the corporate and political interests of their organisations. According to the *Cumhuriyet's* survey, 39% of the journalists said economic pressures exerted by the owner of their organisation are the main source of restriction on their professional autonomy. Moreover, 33% of the journalists considered the ideological and political perspective of their organisation as the second most important organisational effect on the practices and the nature of their work.⁴⁹

Most journalists in private channels I interviewed said that economic interests of the private media companies have crucial effect on their work practices and the production of news. Time and time again journalists referred to the pressures from the owner of their organisation when asked to tell the most important organisational influence on the news. A journalist from Kanal D commented that:

⁴⁹. Orhan Bursali, op.cit. 1996.

"We have self-censorship here. Our bosses would not like us to make critical news about other bosses. For example, if your boss owns a bank or if he is involved in the building business you cannot produce critical news on the banking, financial or construction sectors. Therefore, our role in producing this kind of news is diminished."⁵⁰

In dealing with sensitive events and issues with interpretations which might be upsetting to the status quo the journalists have to face constant pressures from their employers. Kadir Çelik, Star's prominent current affairs producer commented on his resignation from Star, and then from Kanal 6 that:

"Kanal 6 had enormous debts to the state banks. Therefore, we (the journalists) were asked by our employer not to offend Çiller (then prime minister). In other words, we were forced to make 'biased' programmes. So, you have only one option to end giving concessions to your boss: resignation. Otherwise, you continue undermining objective and impartial news programming."⁵¹

To some journalists in private channels, the sole purpose of their profession has become the fulfillment of commercial criteria demanded by their organisations:

"The main function of journalist, as I perceive, is to deliver accurate information to the society and to serve the public. Journalists are the voice of the people. But, what we are doing at the moment in Turkey is far from these descriptions. We are in a commercial war. We, as journalists, cannot ask what is really going on in the country. We are tied up with the funds and loans given to our bosses by the state. For example, now the government is selling the state companies. Can we ask why and how they are going to be privatised? No."⁵²

As far as the ideological pressures are concerned most journalists in private channels admitted that they have to accept the credo of the organisation and act accordingly when producing the news. The professional judgement and the personal views of the journalists seem to play a minor role in deciding what is newsworthy. This influence is more intense in the channels with strong political views, namely the

⁵⁰. Kanal D's journalist, recorded interview, 26.12.1994.

⁵¹. Milliyet, 28.11.1995.

⁵². Star's journalist, recorded interview, 15.7.1994.

conservative Islamist channels. For example, TGRT's correspondents are required by their seniors to strictly observe the general programme and broadcasting policy of the organisation, which is outlined as "total respect to the indivisible unity of the state, the laws, and the religious, moral and traditional values of the people".⁵³

3.3. Professional Factors

We have seen in the previous sections how news media and the journalists are influenced by political and economic constraints. However, one might ask why Turkish journalists are so vulnerable to such pressures. Thus, in this section, I will examine the professional factors, such as the organisation of journalists, the working conditions for Turkish journalists, and the problems caused by these factors. I will, then, discuss the problems of Turkish journalism with regard to ethical issues which affect its reliability and trustworthiness of the journalism in the eyes of the Turkish public.

3.3.1. Trade Unions

Since 1990, the media sector has had to face the worst ever chronic unemployment, redundancies and deunionisation. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, there has been a decrease of 29% in the number of people employed in the commercial mass media sector since 1988.⁵⁴ Many journalists, especially the ones who were the members of the Turkish Journalists Union (TJU) lost their jobs. By 1991, 495 journalists who were members of the TJU had already lost their jobs. Most of these dismissals took place in *Veb Ofset*, *Gelisim Publications*, *Günes*, which used to be one of the major newspapers), *Günaydin*, *Tan*, *Fotospor*, and five local newspapers controlled by Asil Nadir Companies Group which went bankrupt.⁵⁵ For

⁵³. TGRT's representative in Ankara, recorded interview, 5.1.1995.

⁵⁴. *Basin Kurultayi 1992*, op.cit.

⁵⁵. 200 of these journalists were from *Günaydin*, 100 from *Tan*, 70 from *Günes*, 50 from *Milliyet*, 20 from *Panorama*, 50 from *Fotospor*, 5 from *Cumhuriyet*. See Bırsel Küçük, *Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası* (Turkish Journalists Union), unpublished MA thesis, Istanbul University, Social Sciences Institute, Istanbul, 1992, p.42.

months the journalists who worked in the newspapers owned by Asil Nadir were neither able to receive their salaries nor to claim their social rights gained by the TJU. The worsening economic conditions of the country caused chronic unemployment in the sector. The number of places in which journalists can work were closed down or merged with other media companies. Media companies began to reduce the number of staff and seemed to be reluctant to recruit new people. This situation has had a negative effect on the job security, and also increased the competition among the journalists in the same organisation, often diminishing professional solidarity.

The TJU is faced, as a result of the anti-trade union campaign of media owners, with a danger of falling behind the minimum membership needed for collective bargaining. Trade unionism in the press was discouraged and hampered by the owners of the media. In some cases, journalists are forced not to join, or resign their membership of the union.⁵⁶ This made it virtually impossible for journalists to have their say in the editorial policy and the management of the organisation they work for. Instead, they have become increasingly vulnerable to the institutional pressures.

The Istanbul Journalists Union, which was established in 1952 was the first trade union in the media sector. This union joined TÜRK-İS, Turkish Worker Unions Confederation and after taking the name of Turkish Journalists Union (TJU) it organised in other cities as well as Istanbul. In 1965 another trade union, the Turkish Non-Manual Workers Union merged with the TJU. With the changes in trade unions legislation concerning the membership implemented by the 1971 military government the TJU had to face several problems. However, when the TJU and Technician Journalists Union merged the membership of the TJU increased to over 3000 in one day. The military coup of 12 September 1980 saw the start a new era for the TJU. The new union legislation approved in 1983 brought restrictions in terms of job description and the TJU lost 1300 of its members. A study by Birsal Küçük on the perceptions of the member journalists about the

⁵⁶. Orhan Erinc, Director General of the TJU, unrecorded interview, 3. 12. 1993.

TJU indicates that the crisis of the TJU after the 1980s was caused not only by the general economic, social and political factors but also by the TJU itself. The members of the TJU argued that their union was far from representing their demands and its main function became to collect membership fees. This caused the member journalists to lose their belief and trust in the TJU.⁵⁷ Another study on Turkish journalists by M. Kemal Öke reached a similar conclusion that the majority of the journalist he surveyed found the TJU inadequate in terms of its syndical activities.⁵⁸

The number of TJU's members in 1994 was 3251. However, this figure does not only include the journalists with a yellow press card but also the personnel who are employed in different stages of the printing of the newspapers. The job definition of the journalists by the TJU does not include the journalists working in public and private radio and television. TRT's journalists are not and cannot be members of the TJU. TRT's journalists' status, as described by its law is 'civil servants', who are still not allowed to join or to form a trade union of their own. On the other hand, journalists in private radio and television did not have a clear job definition until the new law passed in the Parliament in 1994. Moreover, these organisations are the extension of big press companies and they are unsympathetic to the trade unions. All journalists in private channels who I interviewed said they are not members of the TJU. Journalists said also that they are under constant threat of being sacked because they do not have a trade union in their organisations to protect their social rights against the employer. This, they said, puts enormous pressure on their journalistic practices and autonomy.

Recently, a 'news pool system' has been formed in the media sector. With this system, media companies which are owned by the same proprietor would utilise the same human resources in their companies. The journalists working in the main daily newspaper

⁵⁷. Bırsel Küçük, *Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası (Turkish Journalists Union)*, unpublished MA thesis, Social Sciences Institute, The University of Istanbul, 1992, p. 56.

⁵⁸. M. Kemal Öke, *Gazeteci, (The Journalist)*, Ankara: ÇGD Publications, 1994.

of the media holdings are required to produce news for the company's 'promotion dailies', whose main target is to increase sales by various lottery campaigns.⁵⁹ However, this system has been criticised by the trade unions and the professional associations on the grounds that it would violate the social rights of the journalists. It has been pointed out also that when journalists working in the companies owned by the same person are made redundant they would have no chance of getting job in other media companies. These have been some of the most negative consequences for journalists of the concentration of ownership and monopolisation in the media sector on the journalists.

3.3.2. Professional Associations

The total number of the journalism associations shows variations according to different sources. A piece of recent research reports that there are 47 associations, most of which operate outside three big cities.⁶⁰ Recently the Istanbul Association of Journalists acquired the name of Turkish Journalists Association. The Contemporary Journalists Association was established by the left-wing journalists in 1978. As stated in its regulations its principal aim is "to take actions which would provide opportunities for the journalists in the press and the broadcasting organisations to enhance their professional and social values and knowledge".⁶¹ As far as the professional progress of Turkish journalism is considered, the establishment of the Press Council has been one of the important developments and widely debated in the contemporary history of Turkish journalism history. Some journalists claimed that the Press Council would be another restricting body on the freedom of press if the necessary modifications were not made in the laws related to the work of journalists. However, with the participation of 28 newspapers, 22 periodicals, 11 news agencies, 6 publishing and 6 press companies, it was

⁵⁹. *Cumhuriyet*, 20.7.1996.

⁶⁰. Abdülrezak Altun, *Türkiye'de Gazetecilik ve Gazeteciler (Journalism and Journalists in Turkey)*, ÇGD Publications, Ankara: 1995, p. 79.

⁶¹. *Çagdas Gazeteciler Dernegi Tüzüğü (The Regulation of the Contemporary Journalist Association)*, Ankara, 28.12.1978.

officially established in 1988. The number of member journalists who joined the Council was initially 627 and increased to 1455 in 1990.⁶² However, despite their increased membership in recent years, the professional journalism associations the Press Council in Turkey have little power to determine the ethical and professional standards of the journalism and to protect the rights of their members against the government and the owners.

3.3.3. Press Card

The press card and the privileges it gives to the journalists cause an important source of controversy on the freedom of the news media. It is an identity card, but also it entitles its holders to benefit from discounts in transportation and communication, and, more importantly, provides an easy access to many places without obtaining previous permission. Recent research has pointed out that, compared to the journalists in many European countries, the Turkish journalists are offered more financial privileges by the state.⁶³ A report prepared by the Press Congress in 1992 stated that:

"Privileges attached to press cards should be done away with. The authority to deliver a press card, that is to say to decide who is and who is not a journalist, should not be the Directorate General of the Press and Information. The trade unions and other professional organisations of press workers and the employers' trade unions should come together in a council and determine the standards and conditions required for the obtaining of a press card and also be empowered to take it back. The yellow press card regulation should be changed and the power to deliver such cards be invested with an impartial council composed of the professional organisations of those working in the press and broadcasting sector."⁶⁴

⁶². Zeynep Alemdar, *Oyunun Kuralı: Basında Özdenetim (The Rule of the Game: Self-Control in the Press)*, Bilgi Publications, Ankara, 1990, p. 111.

⁶³. Abdülrezak Altun, op.cit., p. 139.

⁶⁴. *Basın Kurultayı 1992*, op.cit.

A group of journalists in the press and the television channels, thus, refuse to carry the press card as they believe it is another way of putting political and financial pressure on the journalists. One journalist from Kanal D argued that:

"I refused to get the yellow press card. There are two groups of people who are entitled to get cards given by the state though they are not paid by the state: the prostitutes and the journalists. I am not paid by the state. Therefore, why should I carry its card. Second, my profession should not be approved by the people in the Directorate General of Press and Information. They only look at the legal procedures but they cannot know who are really qualified to work as a journalist in the sector. The press card should be given either by the trade unions or the professional associations."⁶⁵

3.3.4. Ethical Issues

In addition to the influences on the journalists exerted by the legal framework, the absence of strong journalist organisations, whose sanctions have come in the form of 'warnings' or 'expulsion' from the associations but not from the profession led to the situation that the ethical codes of journalism in Turkey have been observed arbitrarily, and, in some instances, have been violated. This, as well as posing a serious threat to press freedom, has undermined the credibility of the news media in the eye of the public. In fact, this problem has had its roots in the 12 September 1980 coup d'etat after which a difficult era had begun for the media due to the political pressures and the worsening economic situation. Orhan Erinç, the president of the TJU commented that:

"After the 12 September, in Turkey we have seen that individualism has increased in the society and also in the press sector. This has weakened the professional solidarity between the journalists. Besides, wage and personnel policies of the media companies created a caste system in the sector. On the one hand there are reporters, journalists, managers who receive astronomic salaries. On the other hand there are journalists who receive the minimum wage. This puts great psychological pressure on those who are poorly paid."⁶⁶

⁶⁵. Kanal D's journalist, recorded interview, 1.12.1994.

⁶⁶. Orhan Erinç, unrecorded interview, 3.12.1993.

The fierce competition between the big media companies have also had a detrimental effect on ethical values and principles of Turkish journalism. The journalists who played active part in the 'promotion campaign wars' between the media corporations have come to be intensively criticised and questioned both by the public and the journalists. Some columnists and writers accused their colleagues with harsh words, such as 'clowns', 'yes-men', 'opportunists', 'reptiles', 'centipedes', 'scorpions'.⁶⁷ In one case, Cengiz Çandar who is a well-known journalist, not so much because of his success, but because of his close relationships with the government recorded an informal telephone conversation with his friend which he later published. There were strong reactions from other journalists resulting his dismissal from the Association of Journalists. Some journalists are criticised by their colleagues and the journalism associations for having close relations with the government, the politicians, and, in some events, of taking role of mediator in the formation of governments. For example, İlnur Çevik, journalist and the owner of *Turkish Daily News* has been criticised by his colleagues of being 'the man of every era' because of his close relations with the prime ministers and the presidents in the past, and, recently, his active lobbying in favour of the Islamic-led coalition government before its formation.⁶⁸

One other concern about the media in terms of ethical codes has been its increasing involvement in the domestic and international political problems of the country. In some events the role played by some journalists went beyond their professional boundaries. For example, journalists who followed and reported the operations of the army in southeast Anatolia were awarded with the 'Mehmetçik Journalist' prize by the Army. The ÇGD (Contemporary Journalists Association) reacted to this on the grounds that 'Mehmetçik' is a name for the Turkish private soldier, and the

⁶⁷. See Dilek Önder, 'Interview With İlhan Selçuk', *Hürriyet*, 2.1.1994; İlhan Selçuk, 'Gazeteciye Ne Oldu?' (What Happened to the Journalists?), *Cumhuriyet*, 29.12.1993; Özgen Acar, 'Gazeteci Akrep Degildir' (Journalists Are Not Scorpions), *Cumhuriyet*, 26.12.1993.

⁶⁸. Emin Çölaslan, 'Gazeteciler' (Journalists), *Hürriyet*, 7.7.1996.

journalists should not accept such titles. A journalist from TRT who did not accept the prize was banished to the 'city of the exiles', an ironic name given to Istanbul by the TRT's staff because of its hard living conditions for those on a fixed salary. Mehmet Ali Birand, a well-known journalist and producer was highly critical of the journalists who, he said, are behaving as if they are the saviours of the country:

"The conventional press in Turkey is working for the security forces, the army and the state because of the fear of the dismemberment of the country. They think if 'we' do not hold on the state policies the country would collapse, like it happened to the Ottoman Empire. However, 'we' are hired journalists but not elected politicians. 'We' are not paid to unite the country. 'We' are supposed to provide accurate information to the public."⁶⁹

In February 1993 on a news story by *Türkiye's* correspondent in Bosnia reporting that 'I killed a Serb in the Bosnian Front' the ÇGD initiated a campaign called 'The Journalist Is Not Soldier'. It was supported by hundreds of journalists who signed an open letter protesting against journalists behaving like soldiers.⁷⁰ Moreover, some journalists from *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet* and *Sabah*, and their television channels were actively involved in the crisis between Greece and Turkey in January 1996, as a result of disagreement over a small Aegean island by erecting a Turkish flag on it.

3.4. Education and Training of Journalists

One of the most influential factors on the socialization of media worker into their occupations prior to their active engagement with their particular jobs is the educational background and training of media professionals. Elliott and Golding argued in *Making the News* that one of the most important factors in improving news production is "not only changing the product but also the producers".⁷¹ They pointed out that better education and

⁶⁹. Mehmet Ali Birand, *Conference on Media and Democracy*, Anglo-Turkish Association, London, 20.11.1995.

⁷⁰. *Basin Güncesi (The Dairy of The Press)*, Ankara: ÇGD Publications, 1994, pp 199-201.

⁷¹. P.Elliott and P. Golding, *Making the News*, London: Longman, 1979, p.212.

training for journalists is one of the most important ways of improving the news. Philip Gaunt in his comparative study of factors which influence the selection and the production process of news in different countries found that one of the most important factors was training.⁷² Andrew McBarnet argued that "training provides an entree into both the disciplining of journalists and discipline of journalism".⁷³ It is during their formal education and training that the media professionals are socialized into their professions.⁷⁴ Through professional education and training they learn the practical techniques and normative requirements of professional practice before they actually begin to work. Besides shaping and consolidating the aspirants' ideas about their occupational identity education and training help to maintain and promulgate the existing ideology. According to Altschull, who has suggested normative framework for press freedom and responsibility, schools of journalism transmit ideologies and value systems of the society in which they exist and inevitably assist those in power to maintain their control of the news media.⁷⁵ Like journalism, the institutions providing specialised education and training in journalism are sectors of the society which create the norms and practices without radically contradicting the values and the ideology of the socio-political system since this is the *raison d'être* for their existence. The training of journalists is unsurprisingly a reflection of the journalistic practices and the society at large. Thus, it is strongly influenced by the political, cultural and social context in which it exists. Journalism training perpetuates or modifies professional journalistic practices and moulds the perception of journalists have of the role and function of the media. Because

⁷². Philip Gaunt, *Choosing the News; The Profit Factor in News Selection*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1990.

⁷³. Andrew McBarnet, *Disciplining the Journalist: An investigation of Training Methods*, *Media, Culture and Society*, 1979, Vol:1, pp.181-193

⁷⁴. John Soloski, *News Reporting and Professionalism: Some Constraints on the Reporting of the News*, *Media, Culture and Society*, 1989, Vol:11, pp.207-228

⁷⁵. J.H. Altschull, *Agents of Power: The Role of the News Media in Human Affairs*, New York: Longman, 1984.

journalism training influences the selection and processing of news, it also has an indirect effect on the way in which we view the world around us.

The education and training of journalists and other media professionals were often considered as part of development of the media systems in the world. In the light of the debates on fundamental issues of communication during the 19th and 20th sessions of UNESCO's General Conferences, an International Commission for the Study of Communication problems was established in 1977, whose president was Sean McBride. This Commission produced a list of documents regarding the important issues which need to be studied and investigated. Examination of communication training and a review of facilities and resources for such training around the world was included in the Commission's agenda. The training of media professionals is regarded as fundamental to the effective operation and development of communication systems.⁷⁶ On the world scale, it can be said that mass media studies are a fairly recent phenomenon which began only at the turn of the century; they did not develop systematically until after the Second World War. Journalism has been the dominant activity of such studies in universities and other educational institutions. Almost every country has at least one institution which provides such education and most are associated with universities. With the rapid development of mass media particularly television in the second half of the 20th century, academic media education started to be widely available throughout the world. Today, besides undergraduate and postgraduate degrees offered by universities in many countries, several short courses have also been introduced both within and outside universities to provide opportunities for interested people to acquire required skills and techniques of journalism, radio, film and television production.

3.4.1. Education and Training of Turkish Journalists

⁷⁶ Report by the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, *Many Voices , One World*, London: Kogan Page, UNESCO, 1980.

Professional education and training for journalism in Turkey are provided by both industrial and academic institutions. The public service broadcaster, TRT is still the only institution which requires journalism candidates to pass several tests together with a final evaluation at the end of three months' training session. However, neither pre-recruitment nor on-the-job training of TRT is as efficient as one would expect it to be due to the bureaucratic structure and financial deficiencies of the institution. Except for a few attempts in the press, commercial media have neglected the initial and the further education and training of its labourforce. Private television channels have employed the qualified personnel from TRT or the successful journalist in the press, thus they did not need to invest in human resources. Today, there are nine Communication Faculties in Turkey providing journalism and broadcasting education. However, they have always been criticised by different groups of people including the students, the professionals and the teaching staff for not preparing the students for the actual world.

The deficiencies in education and training for journalism can be explained in two ways. First, there is the present crisis of Turkish universities caused by anti-democratic legal restrictions and recent economic decisions based on free market ideologies since the early eighties. Moreover, the policy of the governments on the higher education has been generally in favour of quantitative rather than qualitative improvement. Second, neither the mass media industry nor the professionals have been able to set the standards of journalism and other media professions due to the unstable and troublesome structure of the socio-political and economic system. The statistics and the numbers indicate that there has been a boom in the capacity of higher education institutions in terms of the number of universities and students. At the beginning of 1992, there were 29 state universities and 1 foundation (semi-private) university. These numbers doubled in 1993 with the addition of 21 new universities. In 1994, there were 408 faculties, 270 colleges and 222 institutions offering academic degrees. There will be more private universities in the years to come. It has been argued that this tendency would inevitably restrict the opportunities of low-income people to benefit from higher education. However, neither the number of teaching staff nor the quality of resources yet meet the requirements of a contemporary university.

In spite of the quantitative increase in universities, how quality in education would be achieved has remained an unanswered question. As with all developing countries, Turkey has a young population. In the coming ten years, the number of people between 18-21 age group is predicted to be 5 million which is a considerable part of the whole population. Every year, the number of young people who want to go on higher education increases. This is because of the fact that the university education is perhaps the most important qualification for obtaining a job in Turkey.

As has happened in most of parts of the world, the education and training of Turkish media professionals at the academic level have usually been influenced by developments in the mass media industry. Before the sixties, journalism was, as it was in most part of the world, an apprenticeship system. 'Babiali', the Fleet Street of the Turkish press was an open school for most journalists and writers. However, professional models were imported mainly from the foreign media. This was not only due to the exposure of the Turkish society to Western values from the establishment of the Republic in 1923 but also due to the inevitable dependence of Turkish news media on the services of major European and American news agencies. The news values and social values assumed by the agencies became models for the aspiring Turkish journalists. Traditional values of journalism started to be replaced by the values and standards developed in Western media.

It was only during the late sixties that journalism education began at an academic level. The first journalism undergraduate course was organised by Ankara University, Faculty of Political Sciences in 1963. Its curriculum was heavily dominated by the courses related to political sciences and sociology while the other one in Istanbul consisted of mainly economics as well as vocational courses since it was part of the Faculty of Economics at Istanbul University. In Izmir, the third biggest city of Turkey, the Journalism College was operated under the administrative body of the Faculty of Law. Its course content was composed of primarily law, and secondly other social sciences, and practical courses, such as photography and publishing. Even today a great deal of

contribution to the development of these courses concerning teaching and research in Turkey is made by academics from economics, politics, and social sciences.

The first television transmission in Turkey at the end of sixties has changed the appearance of whole Turkish media industry and also the structure of media studies courses. Journalism and Public Relations Schools at that time were expanded with another department called Radio and Television. After the eighties, they were renamed as Press and Broadcasting Schools. They were no longer to operate under any Faculty but the administrative body of University Senates. Recently, they became 'Communication Faculties' divided into three departments; Journalism, Radio and Television, and Public Relations. The Communication Faculties are concentrated mainly in big cities of Turkey; Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Eskisehir, Konya and Kayseri. Despite the centrally planned structure of these faculties, there are differences between these courses relating to teaching staff, content of courses and facilities. In recent years, the increasing vocational direction of the Communication Faculties has produced a more clearly articulated correspondence between educational and work experience. They currently provide reasonable facilities for their students in 'hands-on' production work. After the mid-eighties they initiated university-based news agencies, gathering and selling news to the press and broadcast media. They have been publishing tabloid-size newspapers covering some important events and news about the society, media industry, students and universities. Recently they have established radio and television studios that are used both by teaching staff and the students. Thus, it can be said that these courses moved away from being only one-discipline oriented courses to becoming a more professional educational institutions offering more practical and specialised curriculum. However, such courses since their beginning until today have been criticised for being modelled on the North American style of journalism schools because of the increasing number of advertising and public relations courses in their curriculum.

In addition to the education provided by the Communication Faculties and the TRT's professional training, there are only a few short courses that have started with the arrival of private television channels and the increasing popularity of media occupations

among young Turkish population. Until now TRT has provided an established training programme with up-to-date knowledge and technical facilities before recruiting, and to retrain its own personnel. With the proliferation in the number of broadcasting channels the need for skilled and experienced technical and programme personnel increased. However, the unknown and insecure future of public service broadcasting and unpredictable inflation in broadcasting channels since the nineties in Turkey has led towards an understanding that the industry has to find other means of training new entrants and of recruiting rather than relying upon the TRT's training and skilled personnel.

3.5. Conclusion

As an important social institution the profession of journalism is sensitive to cultural trends, political and social upheavals, and economic development. The level of democracy in the country and the structure of the ownership in the media, play a crucial role in relation to the practices of journalists and the production of news. Despite the efforts to consolidate the democratisation process started by successive governments, following the 1980 military administration freedom of expression and of the press in Turkey still suffers from political and legal restrictions and pressures. There are different legal arrangements for the press, the state-owned broadcasting, and the private audio-visual media. Moreover, journalists work within the boundaries of the general political and legal framework of the 1982 Constitution, and of several other important laws, such as the Anti-Terrorism Law.

I have argued that TRT's journalists are not autonomous from the direct intervention of the government. This is because the situation that the legislation of TRT allows the government has an important say in appointing TRT's executive staff, and in controlling its funding and programming. On the other hand, journalists in private television channels are not immune from organisational pressures as well. In producing the news they have to take into account the corporate and political interests of the media company they work for.

Chapter three has also shown that in addition to the legal and institutional influences, the professional context of Turkish journalism has also been an important obstacle to improving the standards of journalism, and securing its autonomy from the political establishment and organisational pressures. Journalists in Turkey by and large failed to organise themselves to defend their rights as workers, and to advance the values and ethics of their profession. In the absence of effective professional organisations and trade unions journalists became even more vulnerable to political, economic and organisational pressures. The efforts of the Turkish Journalists Union, the professional associations, and the Press Council, to impose the system of journalistic ethics and professional norms have been fruitless. The decline in journalistic ethics created the public distrust and scepticism of news media and a resentment of media power.

Another negative feature of the current professional context is the insufficient training and educational resources for journalists. It can be argued that unless this issue is addressed swiftly and decisively the overall improvement of the journalism profession will be in jeopardy. This will in turn affect the quality of the news and other factual programmes.

CHAPTER 4: The Structure of Television News Broadcasting

The emergence of private satellite channels in the early 1990s has introduced a new era in the cultural life of Turkish society. The impact of recent changes in news media on the socio-political dynamics in Turkey has engendered a plethora of critical debates concerning the effects of media on society. Depending on their relationships with politicians and economically powerful groups, private media generated new tensions and rivalries within the existing system. Recently launched private television channels have been criticized for exaggerating, and distorting the news, though they have achieved what the public broadcaster TRT failed to do for long years, by bringing controversial issues on the screen, and by giving access to underrepresented sections of the society. Despite the superiority of TRT, in terms of its technical and organisational capacity, and labour force, the distinctiveness of commercial stations in style, presentation, and format has quickly grasped the attention of the audience. In a matter of a few years, news bulletins on some commercial channels have become top in the television ratings of metropolitan centres. The audience interest in news encouraged private stations to invest more of their human and financial resources in this field, and thus contributed to the present situation in which the production of television news is becoming an expanding business. The inauguration of new channels providing news and current affairs programmes has increased the number of broadcasting hours for television news. As 24-hour channels started to come on the air, the broadcasters have augmented their services with breakfast news, round-the-clock bulletins, and more news and current affairs programmes. As a result, today the Turkish audience has access to a much larger menu of television news than it did in the past.

In chapter four I will attempt to examine the main characteristics, style, outlook and the technical features of the evening news programmes on Turkish television. With this aim, I will analyse one-week of evening news programmes of six major television channels. First, I will explain briefly why studying television news is crucial to our understanding of the whole picture of Turkish news media and journalism.

4.1. Television as a Source of Information in Turkey

Since the late 1970s with television's becoming more and more widespread, television news has become the main source of information for the majority of Turkish audience. The reasons which cause the dominance of television among other mass media are varied. Some of these are directly related to the characteristics of television viewers. One of the most important factors increasing the dependency of audiences on radio and television is illiteracy, which still prevails as an important problem, particularly for developing countries. Turkey provides a good illustration of this point. According to latest figures derived from 1990 census, Turkey had a population of 57.2 million. Only ten years before this census the proportion of illiterate people was 32.6 %. This figure has now decreased as a result of nationwide campaigns carried out during the last decade. According to the UNESCO's latest statistical figures, the percentage of illiterate people of 15 years age and over was 24.0% in 1985 and estimated to be 19.3 % in 1990. It should be taken into account that this is still very high in comparison to only 0.1% of illiteracy above the age of 15 years in Britain in 1983.

In addition to the low level of literacy and schooling, another factor which puts newspapers in a disadvantaged position against television is the chronic circulation problem. The newspaper circulation in Turkey has remained, depending on the success of various promotion campaigns, around 3 to 4 millions whereas the population reached 60 millions in the 1990s. Furthermore, the daily circulation is not evenly distributed among different regions. The highest proportion of the total sales is provided by half a dozen large dailies based in three cities; Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. It was estimated in December 1994 that 21 daily newspapers achieved a total circulation of 2.878.055. However, the circulation 6 major newspapers alone accounted for 2.165.016.¹ (Table 4.1) Moreover, despite technological developments in the printing industry and in transportation there are still problems and delays in delivering newspapers and magazines to the rural areas, where almost 40% of the population live, in either a regular or a

¹. Figures are gathered from newspapers.

widespread fashion. While the total circulation of all newspapers and magazines and hence the effectiveness of the written press, is limited to about four million, broadcast media are widespread and important modes of communication since, due to the large number of radio and television receivers, their signals reach a very large proportion of the country.

Table 4.1. Circulation of major national dailies (December 1994)

Newspapers	Total Circulation
Sabah	583.512
Hürriyet	502.173
Zaman	381.346
Milliyet	333.088
Türkiye	307.130
Cumhuriyet	57.767
TOTAL	2.165.016

Discussions about the impact of private television stations which heralded a new era in Turkish broadcasting are continuing to occupy public agenda recently, but many newspapers are still struggling to increase their circulation. As a direct consequence of the low level of circulation newspapers in Turkey remain behind radio and television with regard to their reach and availability. In 1990, the figures indicated that there were 161 radio receivers and 175 television sets per 1000 people while there were only 72 newspapers.² According to a more recent survey carried out in 1995 by the Turkish State Statistics Institute there was one television receiver for 3 people whereas there was only one book for 6 people and one newspaper for 81 people. The same survey also found that Turkish viewers spent an average of 5.5 hours per day in front of the television set while

². Figures derived from UNESCO and UN Statistical Year Books, France, 1993.

he/she spent only 37 hours a month for reading books.³ Another research indicates that 66.8% of the population over fifteen years of age watches television while only 28.9% of the same population reads the newspapers.⁴ According to the Piar-Gallup national consumption patterns survey conducted in 1991 60% of 11 million Turkish households owned colour television sets. The 1990 'Euro' average (seventeen countries) quoted by Gallup International is 90%. The 1993 consumer survey of Istanbul Chamber of Industry reports that 90% of colour television ownership concentrated in Istanbul. The importance of television in Turkey becomes more apparent when newspaper reading habits are taken into consideration. The 'Euro' average for adults who never read newspapers is 14% as compared to 67.6% for Turkey. The survey also reveals very significant gender differences in Turkey. Only 11.7% of the Turkish women sampled read a newspaper daily; 79.7% never read newspapers. The comparable figures for Turkish men 29.5% and 56.4% respectively.

Besides cultural reasons, the high level of television viewing seemed to be related to average purchasing power which is still very low compared to industrialised countries. The minimum wage in Turkey is currently less than £200 while the price of major newspapers is changing between 30 to 40 pence which means that the consumers have to spend 6% of their monthly income to buy a daily newspaper. Television, on the other hand, is seen as free since Turkish viewers do not have to pay license fees and the revenue of television channels comes largely from advertisements.

To sum up, the factors which makes electronic media, in particular television the main source of information for the majority of the population in Turkey is a complex mixture of cultural reasons such as the level of literacy and education and economic ones like the level of purchasing power and the average income per capita.

³. Selim Aksin, 'Yazili Kültür' (Written Culture), *Teleskop-Milliyet*, 28 January- 3 February 1995.

⁴. Piar-Siar Group, *Profile of Turkey in 1989: Values, Attitudes, and Behaviours*, Istanbul: Research Report, 1989.

4.2. Explosion in Television News

Since the arrival of commercial media in the early 1990s, news broadcasting in Turkey, which was under the state monopoly for some 60 years, has been transformed a great deal both in terms of quality and quantity. According to the television guides on 12 December, 1994 which is one of the recording days for this study, 10 major television stations including two public channels devoted a total of 14 hours 30 minutes of their transmission time to the news programmes only. (Table 4.2)

Table 4.2 Number and duration of newscasts on 12 December, 1994

Television channels	No. of news programmes	Total duration of news programmes (hours minutes)
TRT 1	8	2.30
TRT 2	4	1.35
TGRT	6	1.50
Star	5	1.20
Samanyolu	3	1.30
Kanal 6	3	1.55
HBB	3	1.15
ATV	3	1.05
Kanal D	3	50
Show TV	2	35
TOTAL	43	14.30

This totals around 5148 hours annually which is almost five times higher than the amount of both news and current affairs programmes broadcasted by TRT1 and TRT2 in 1991 when private televisions were only starting to appear. In 1991 the major two channels of TRT broadcast 1518 hours of new and current affairs programmes.⁵ In 1990 news programmes alone on TRT's first channel had amounted to two hours on average.⁶

⁵ Figures are provided by TRT Directorate of Television Programme Planning and Coordination.

⁶ Dilruba Çatalbas, *Television Coverage of Foreign News: A Comparative Study of the BBC and TRT*, unpublished MA dissertation, The University of Leeds, 1991, p.135.

After the launch of private stations TRT started to put more emphasis on news by introducing bulletins every hour. The increase in total broadcasting hours for news does not necessarily prove that there has been a similar rise in the number of its audiences. However, these figures indicate an increase in real terms, thus, placing television in an even more central position in Turkey as a news and information provider for the general public.

A second explosion in news and information on Turkish television has been experienced in terms of the quantity of current affairs programmes. Though they differ from each other in terms of formats, which range from reality shows to more serious documentaries, presently almost all channels have one or two current affairs programmes, some of which enjoy considerably high audience figures. In December 1994 when the recording of news programmes for the present analysis took place there were around 35 current affairs programmes on major Turkish television channels.⁷ While current affairs documentaries and studio-based discussions have dealt with 'serious' issues, news magazines and reality shows seem to be more concerned with 'popular' and 'human interest' stories.⁸ In the same time span, there were 7 reality shows and 4 news magazines on three channels alone; Star, ATV and Show TV while there were 15 studio-based discussions and 9 current affairs documentaries on 9 major channels. However, the distinction between these different formats was sometimes blurred because even the most serious ones had sensational, dramatic and populist aspects. These issues will be mentioned in greater detail during the course of Chapter seven which deals with popular television news and reality television programming on Turkish channels.

⁷. Figures provided by AGB, the largest audience ratings agency in Turkey.

⁸. For a detailed description of 'official', 'alternative' and 'popular' news, see John Fiske, 'Popularity and the politics of information', in P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks (eds.), *Journalism and Popular Culture*, London: Sage, 1992.

4.3. Evening News Programmes

Most of the news programmes on Turkish television are broadcast either before or after the most popular entertainment programmes and shows which dominate the schedules. As in many other countries, the major evening news programmes regularly secure places among the top rated programmes. In December 1994, main evening news programmes on ATV, Star and Show TV were among the top ten television programmes in Turkey. Audience ratings on six television channels under investigation in this study were 11.37% on ATV, 9.48% on Show TV, 9.15% on Star, 3.51% on TRT, 2.55% on Kanal D, and 0.97% on TGRT.⁹

4.4. Advertisements and Commercialisation of Television News

For news programmes to attract the highest possible ratings is very important because as a reporter working for Kanal D puts it:

"the rating of the news programme influences the ratings of any programme broadcast immediately afterwards. On commercial television everything is determined by ratings."¹⁰

The higher ratings television channels have the more commercial revenue they can earn. Therefore, it can be suggested that advertisements have a direct effect on the form and the nature of the programme. In Turkey during the early years of privatisation, due to the absence of legal restrictions for commercials the private channels had extensive advertising both within and between programmes. The commercial breaks during their evening newscasts could last nearly as long as the programme itself. The present Radio and Television Law which came into force in April 1994 limited advertising broadcasts to 15% of the daily transmission hours and 20% of any one hour. Moreover, according to the new regulations television channels are not allowed to accept commercials in news

⁹. Figures are derived from AGB.

¹⁰. Recorded interview with a foreign news correspondent in Kanal D, 26.12.1994.

programmes which last less than 30 minutes.¹¹ Table 4.3 shows the average length of commercial breaks and percentage of advertisements in the news programmes under investigation. However it should be noted that these calculations do not include long commercial breaks at the beginning and the end of the news programmes, particularly on private channels.

Table 4.3 Average length and percentage of commercial breaks in news programmes

Channel	Average length of news programmes* mins secs	Average length of commercial breaks mins secs	Percentage of commercial breaks**
ATV	37.46	3.21	8.50
Kanal D	29.21	0.00	0.00
Star	32.11	3.90	12.12
Show TV	29.07	2.19	7.51
TGRT	24.20	0.00	0.00
TRT	41.51	0.00	0.00

*This figure include only the total duration of all news items in news programmes.

**This shows the percentage of commercials in overall duration of news items broadcast during the news programme.

4.5. Anchorpersons

The development of news and current affairs programmes on commercial channels carried a star system which had already existed in newspapers to television screens. In this system the most popular producer-anchormen were either famous newspaper journalists and columnists such as Güneri Civaoglu, Mehmet Barlas and Mehmet Ali Birand or ex-TRT producers and presenters such as Ali Kirca, Ugur Dünder and Gülgün Feyman. Thus, most of the famous television news personalities were recruited from newspapers which had either direct ownership links or business

¹¹. *Radyo ve Televizyonların Kuruluş ve Yayınları Hakkında Kanun No:3984 (The Law on the Establishment and Broadcasts of Radio and Television Stations No:3984)*, published in Official Newspaper, No:21911, 20 April, 1994.

partnerships with television companies. This gave rise to a new class of bi-media journalists that simultaneously write in their daily columns, appear as commentators in the main evening newscasts and even produce their own current affairs programmes. Furthermore, some of these star journalists and producers, such as Güneri Civaoglu, also hold managerial positions in private channels as they did in the upper echelons of the newspapers. Since the introduction of the first private television channel, these star journalists moved from one station to the other with extravagant financial rewards paid in US dollars. For example, Civaoglu who used to write for *Sabah* began his television career as the director general of Show TV with a monthly salary of 50 thousand US dollars and later moved to ATV, owned by his previous employer *Sabah* group in return for a record salary of 75 thousand dollars.

The present star-anchor system in Turkey shows similarities with the networks and even local television stations in the US where anchorpersons earn seven-figure salaries.¹² On ATV, the news is presented by Ali Kirca who is also the head of the news department. During his years at the TRT, Kirca had gained considerable success as one of the most prominent broadcast journalists and producers. Unlike news readers on other private channels, he is a crucial agent of the production, editing, and flow of news bulletins and also of some current affairs programmes on ATV. His very presence assures a certain audience, one that has already been familiar with his persona and his particular style and skills. Kirca does more than simply reading the news; he is the manager, editor, presenter and sometimes the commentator as well.

Another well-known anchorperson of Turkish television is Gülgün Feyman, who used to be a TRT presenter for breakfast news and other popular entertainment programmes. But Feyman made her real fame as an anchorperson on the Star's screens. Her name was so much identified with Star news that she was even taken to court with the charges of infringement of private rights as a result of the negative broadcasts of Star

¹² For a detailed information on American network news anchors, see Roger Wallis and Stanley Baran, *The Unknown World of Broadcast News*, London: Routledge, 1990 and *Naked News: Anchors*, documentary programme, Channel 4, 13.4.1995.

about Nurettin Sözen, the mayor of Istanbul between 1991 and 1994. Therefore, many were surprised when she suddenly decided to leave Star to join Show TV which was then the only major rival of Star. With Feyman's close-up shot in front of monitors in the studio, Show TV established a particular image for its newscasts. Behind the scene of Show TV's news, there used to be Ufuk Güldemir, *Cumhuriyet's* ex-foreign correspondent in the United States, who later left Show TV to become the general editor of *Milliyet*. In 1996 Feyman returned to Star.

Star has followed a somewhat different path in the presentation of its news programmes by employing young and stunning female broadcasters who were either beauty queens or fashion models. Star has also employed female weathercast presenters who have had no previous experience in weathercasting or even in broadcasting. Then, some other channels including public broadcaster the TRT have followed the same trend but within the boundaries of their broadcasting and personnel policy.

Private television channels usually prefer one newscaster and resort to outside contributors only for sports and wheathercasts. The way the newscaster is framed varies considerably from one station to another. At the beginning of the ATV's bulletins Ali Kirca is seen standing in front of the set and presenting headlines to the camera. The presenters on Star and Show TV, on the other hand, are shot in relatively closer frames accompanied with large characters or digital video effects. TRT prefers to put a distance between the viewer and its newspersons who are shot sitting behind a desk.

With regard to the costumes of the presenters it seems a common trend to appear in very expensive designer suits. What is more interesting, at end of the bulletins the title of the retailers which produce the suits is written on the screen. This is a novel practice that is brought by private television stations and due to fierce competition even the TRT has to apply the same means to increase its advertising revenue.

4.6. Constructing the Image: Sets

News broadcast studios on some private television stations resemble a 'CNN like' environment: machines, screens, computers and control room are apparent in the

background while staff members are seen as busily working. This kind of set seeks to strengthen the programme's credibility by giving a full view of the underlying technical aids and human resources not to mention the implicit reference made to US networks, especially CNN, which initiated this type of set design.

On the whole private channels have a more Western and modern look than the public broadcaster, TRT. They seem to be competing with each other by choosing powerful graphics in their news logos and impressive studio environments to create the image of their identity, and to look distinctive to the audience. Sometimes the technical outlook seems to be given even more attention than the content of the news as they often change their logos and set designs. Although they invent new graphics and designs the modern and American look of the private stations remained the same whereas TRT still seem to be resisting latest technologies in its newscasts. Compared to the newscasts of private channels, TRT's newscasts look outdated both in terms of technical and editorial features of news reporting. Its set is rather sober and dull. It still uses captions which are very simplistic whereas other private channels use recent sophisticated graphics techniques. Furthermore, the TRT's desk is fairly basic. The background is stark, featuring the simple graphic title of a world-map. The overall impression given by the TRT set is that here we are being presented with the plain facts, unembellished truth brought us through the aegis of the well-suited newsreaders.

4.7. Content Analysis of News Programmes

Concentrating on seven chronological days of contemporary broadcast journalism, this section of the present chapter will compare six major Turkish television channels in terms the general outlook, format and length as well as the style, presentation and audio-visual features of their newscasts.

4.7.1. Total Duration and Number of News Items

The duration and the number of items covered by the main evening newscasts varies, statistically speaking, from day to day. However, we can still detect certain

regularities between the channels and the news programmes. In general, the average number of news items a programme contains changes although the overall length of the programme remains the same. On some days when there were more incidents more stories were covered in news bulletins.

Even though bulletins are of comparable length and are scheduled at similar times the duration and average number of news items differ from one channel to another. The availability of news source, news team and broadcasting technologies are some of the technical reasons which may influence the number of items covered. Among all the six channels analysed here with an average length of 41 minutes TRT's news bulletins were the longest. This is mainly because of the lengthy reportage of domestic political events and issues by the public broadcaster. According to its legislation TRT is obliged to give coverage to press releases or group meetings of all political parties which have members in the parliament on its news programmes. This amounts to around 10 minutes in any given day, considering the number of political parties, which was 9 at the time of the recording. With regard to the duration of news programmes ATV follows the TRT with an average of 38 minutes. ATV's news programmes resembles current affairs style and, thus, the average duration of the news items on ATV is also highest compared to all other channels. This is in agreement with another finding of this analysis that with the exception of Star, the verbal part of news items before they are cut to either a film footage or a correspondent is longer on ATV than on the others.

In addition to the total length of the programmes the number of events covered in each is also measured to allow a more defined comparison between the two and to see how different channels manage their limited time to cover stories. With an average of 28 items the TRT was again leader in terms of the number of news stories. The closest follower of the TRT was Kanal D with 22 items. At the other end of the spectrum were TGRT's newscasts which contained only 15 news stories on average. This can be explained by the findings on technical inputs that the time devoted to news film is highest on TGRT's news bulletins compared with other channels. The TGRT's newscasts were also the shortest.

One of the conclusions that Glasgow Media Group reached on the relationship between the number of items and the duration of news programmes was that "the longer the news the greater number of stories covered".¹³ However, another research on television news programmes in Western Europe has found that the number of events covered does not increase linearly with the length of the programme.¹⁴ In the case of Turkish news programmes also there is not a direct correlation between the length and the number of news items. The news broadcasts of approximately the same duration on different television channels contained different number of news stories. Table 4.4 shows the average duration of items, their mean number and average length of the news programmes for one week. Although Kanal D and Show TV had the similar length of news bulletin they had different number of news items because the average duration of news stories on Show TV were longer. In the same way, although TRT's newscasts were only 4 minutes longer than ATV's, the average number of items covered on ATV's news programmes remained well below that of TRT.

Table 4.4 Duration and number of news items

Channel	Average no of items	Average duration of	Average length
		items mins secs	mins secs
ATV	16.0	2.22	37.46
Kanal D	22.4	1.18	29.21
Star	21.6	1.30	32.11
Show TV	19.2	1.31	29.07
TGRT	15.4	1.35	24.20
TRT 1	28.2	1.29	41.51

¹³. Glasgow University Media Group, op. cit., 1976, p.88.

¹⁴. François Heinderyckx, 'Television news Programmes in Western Europe: A Comparative Study', *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 8, 1993, pp. 425-450.

Another significant difference between the TRT and other channels is that private channels seemed to adopt a shorter, more selective, and a more speedy format for their new programmes in order to maintain the audience attention. Many journalists, however, complain that this format allows only a limited scope for news reporting. A reporter from Star argued:

"One of the disadvantages of television journalism is that you cannot provide a detailed account of the story. You are given only a limited time. It is not like reporting for newspapers. The attention of Turkish audience for a single news story lasts normally 45 seconds at most, if this is an important news, of course. Otherwise, they start zapping for other channels which decreases the rating of our programme and, thus, the advertising revenue."¹⁵

4.7.2. Headlines

All of the news programmes under the investigation began with a summary of the main points of the major news stories. However, in some news programmes the headlines were structured in an irregular and informalised way. The opening part on some channels resembled a magazine cover or a daily newspaper's front page. Moving or static pictures, scrolls or key words, musical theme, off-screen announcements- many resources were used. Some read the headlines of important news stories before a commercial break or even sometimes before any news item. By repeating the headlines they attempted to enhance the recall of the audience and increase the ratings of the programme.

Private television channels used conspicuous techniques to outline headlines. They were short, loud and were presented with a couple of words at the bottom of the screen. It has been almost a common practice on private stations to give the headlines with film footage and special effects with bright colours. Star used both graphic illustrations and very large letters. On Show TV a vertical title was seen coming from the right side of the screen and stayed with newscaster while she was reading the opening sentence of the news stories. Star, Show TV, and ATV had similar characteristics in terms

¹⁵. Recorded interview with a correspondent in Star, 15.7.1994.

of headlines. They use the latest technological devices to frame the headlines. On the other hand, TGRT and the TRT had relatively modest headlines. In TGRT news, headlines were presented by a voice-over of the newscaster on a blue caption together with the sound of a wire service machine clicking in the background.¹⁶

4.7.3. Style and Narrative

Some bulletins closed with a straightforward and unchanging formula while some of them were concluded with short items giving the share index or weather for the day. However, only the changing items in the programme excluding these opening and closing sequences were measured.

ATV's narrative structure of news bulletins appears to thematically link disparate stories to one another in an attempt to shape the miscellany of a bulletin into a news programme. Each news item is linked to another by a context which bridges two following stories. But this sometimes leads to long conjunctions and comments and turns to a story-telling. ATV's thematic narrative links separate stories like domestic politics and economic problems. These linkages have a clear stylistic purpose, smoothing the joints in the essentially scissors and paste construction of a bulletin. In addition they supply implicit context and form by hinting incidentally at the relationship between events. However, the style of Ali Kirca gives the impression you are watching a daily current affairs programme not a news bulletin.

4.7.4. Technical Structure

The fact that private television channels in Turkey compete against each other, as well as the public broadcaster for their share of audience attention encourages the production of news programmes that are visually attractive, technically superior and

¹⁶ This type of opening in news programmes has been argued to create 'a sense of urgency'. See, Peter Dahlgren 'Network news and the corporate state: the subordinate consciousness of the citizen-viewer', dissertation, New York, 1977, quoted from Gaye Tuchman 'Qualitative methods in the study of news' in *A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies For Mass Communications Research*, (eds.) K. B. Jensen, and N. W. Jankowski, London: Routledge, 1991.

entertaining. Breaking down the results into technical format categories reveals that moving pictures are largely dominant in all the newscasts under consideration. Analysis of news stories by format and technical resources indicates that the percentage of film in the total technical presentation excluding headlines amounted to an average of 74% on five television channels. This figure does not only combine news stories with news film but also interviews on film or correspondents reporting on film. Among the variety of visual techniques utilised, news film contributes most to the presentation and implies the prominence of news stories.

When all inputs with film footage: news film, correspondent on film and interviews on film are calculated TGRT has the largest proportion with a percentage about 82. This is because first, it did not have news items with correspondents reporting from other locations or studios on the recording week. Second, TGRT has the assistance of Ihlas News Agency in gathering not only news but also news film that provides a great advantage over other private television channels. The time devoted to news film by TRT1 is 76%. Similarly, we hardly see correspondents and interview input on TRT1's news bulletins. However, because it is a subscriber to major international news agencies and also member of EBU and it has also the largest nation-wide correspondent and news camera team its news film sources are far greater than other television companies.

Table 4.5. News stories by technical inputs

	ATV	Kanal D	Star	Show TV	TGRT	TRT 1
Newscaster	18.91	20.74	20.88	17.39	15.22	14.77
Newsfilm	63.99	64.44	70.90	70.48	75.30	78.85
Visual materials	0.64	0.00	0.25	1.08	0.50	5.42
Studio Interview	4.40	0.00	0.74	2.30	0.00	0.00
Film Interview	4.92	11.02	4.15	3.30	6.33	0.43
Correspondents in Studio	4.33	3.70	2.74	5.36	0.00	0.00
Correspondents on Film	2.81	0.10	0.34	0.09	2.65	0.53
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100

News stories presented with other visuals, with newscaster, with studio or film interviews and with correspondents either in studio or on film varied from one channel to another. ATV and Star appear to be using more variety of visual narrative techniques than other private channels and TRT. Correspondents appear in vision most on ATV, Show TV and Star (Table 4.5). Using correspondents who are either in the studio from where the bulletin goes on air, or live from Ankara, the centre of the politics. TRT is the only exception to this. In 1995, TRT has started presenting news with correspondents live in other studios. This is becoming an indispensable asset of the news programmes to compete for the audience. On the other hand, some journalists I have interviewed with were highly critical of this technical novelty:

"In fact, we are acting, not making, television news reporting. For example, Star's news programme is very funny. It opens with newsreader who says 'now, we are linked to Ankara'. After long time waiting, we start our reporting with a standard cliché: 'Yes, Rana (Star's newsreader in Istanbul)', then we explain our superior (!) comments, and then VTR goes on air. I don't think it should be like that. Of course, I am always in favour of correspondent's reporting. In cases when the news story really needs to be reported by a correspondent, I should be doing reporting from the actual location where the event occurred, not like a cat on the roof. (Star's correspondents in Ankara report their news in the terrace of Star's news bureau which is situated at the top floor of a high rise building.)"¹⁷

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to look at the general outlook of news programmes on Turkish television. It has argued that television news is a far more important source of information in Turkey than it is in developed countries. This is mainly because of the low educational level of the public, the near absence of both local and regional press, except the few with poor circulation, the concentration of national press in large cities, the low level of income, and the high penetration and availability of television as a form of mass media.

¹⁷. Recorded interview with a correspondent in Star, 15.7.1994.

Today, as a result of the proliferation of private radio and television stations in recent years there are more news and current affairs programmes available to the Turkish audience than ever before. However, an increase in the broadcasting hours of news and factual programming is not the only noticeable development. Since the arrival of private television the style, content, and format of news programmes have also changed substantially. One of the important consequences of this competition between television channels for audience ratings is that news programmes are forced to be ever faster moving, visually appealing and engaging. The use of impressive studio designs, sophisticated graphics and animations, attractive news readers and famous anchorpersons, continuous interruption of the programme, with short and blaring headlines and live reports from the scene were among the several instruments used, often extravagantly, to turn newscasts into a captivating zone for the audience. In addition to adding to the prestige of the channel higher ratings meant more advertising revenue. Moreover, managers of private stations were aware that news programmes, with good ratings, would leave a large audience for the programmes to follow them in 'prime time'. As a result, produced in an environment where commercial concerns are predominant, the news programmes of private stations provided a marked contrast to the TRT convention, which was criticised for being dull, pale and ever official.

CHAPTER 5: Reporting Political and Economic Issues

In modern liberal democratic societies, the media have long been an integral part of the political process. These institutions provide information on the political, social and economic issues which subsequently influences decisions and reactions of ordinary citizens towards public affairs. Thus, it has been argued that the media should help people to discuss the ideas, policies and decisions of the dominant political and economic forces, and to participate in political and public debate by providing essential and adequate information on current issues. Furthermore, the media should broaden their capacity as vertical channels of information between the people and government, by giving access to diverse social groups and institutions to express alternative views.¹

According to the traditional liberal approach, the media has a positive mission to act as 'Fourth Estate' which "disseminates information about rival political parties", and so "enables citizens to make informed and judicious choices", "provides a forum of debate about public policy", and "enables the public to influence government".² The information media which operate within the free market serve as a 'public watchdog', which controls the activities of the government and checks the abuses of political power on behalf of the wider public interest. Private ownership is, therefore, considered as a guarantor for the independence and freedom of the media from government pressure. Today, however, media companies in most countries seem to be taken over by large enterprises, which seek to increase their profit, and to promote private interests by various economic activities. This changing pattern of ownership tends to limit the editorial freedom to criticise and to investigate the activities of big business. Moreover, the conglomeration and the concentration of media companies in the hands of a few powerful corporations makes it

¹. See, Denis McQuail, *Media Performance*, London: Sage, 1992, p. 307-308., Douglas Kellner, *Television and the Crisis of Democracy*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1990, pp. 179-219, and James Curran, 'Mass Media and Democracy', in *Mass Media and Society*, James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (eds.), London: Edward Arnold, 1991, pp.82-117.

². James Curran, 'Alternative Theories of the Press: A Reappraisal', Publication du Centre de Recherches en Civilisation Britannique, France, 1989, pp.121-136.

harder for the minority, oppositional and alternative views to be represented in the political process. Some scholars argue that the transformation of media ownership has also altered the relationship between the media, big business and the government. The large media enterprises which have developed close ties with the business world and the political establishment, have consolidated and expanded their operations and interests with the privileges they have gained from the government.³

In this chapter, I will examine the coverage of domestic events and issues on television news programmes, to shed light on some very important questions, such as to what extent television news reflects the political and economic power structure in Turkey? How do television channels differ from each other with regard to their selection and treatment of domestic political and economic matters? Are their portrayals of controversial political and economic issues supportive of government positions and policies or do they take up a critical stance? To be able to answer these questions I will both quantitatively and qualitatively analyse one weeks coverage of main evening news programmes from six different television channels. Before moving onto this, however, I will briefly introduce the relationships between television and the political establishment in Turkey. Then I will discuss the findings of the quantitative analysis with regard to the main topics and major actors the news programmes contained. In the rest, I will be textually analysing the coverage of two of the most important domestic political events during the recording week; the Customs Union agreement with the European Union, and the demonstrations of public servants for better pay and legal acknowledgment of their right to strike. The analyses of these two issues will mainly examine the range of opinions and the themes taken up by television news to underpin and direct their coverage as well as their visual and verbal discourses.

³. For a critical account of the relationship between the government, and the media conglomerates see Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, New York: Pentagon, 1988; Douglas Kellner, *Television and the Crisis of Democracy*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1990; Elizabeth Fox (ed.) *Media and Politics in Latin America*, London: Sage, 1988.

5.1. Politics and Television News

The political culture of the society, the functioning of the political institutions and the ideological viewpoints of different political groups constitute an important source of influence on news content. In Turkey, since the 1950s, the political system has moved from an authoritarian-bureaucratic single-party regime to a multi-party parliamentary system influenced by peripheral forces. Political democracy, however, has been frequently in trouble during the last three decades. The years of partisan politics, economic breakdown and political violence have resulted in three distinct episodes of military intervention since 1960. Another characteristic of Turkish political life is that it has been dominated by personal conflicts and by clashes between certain ideologies and counter-ideologies in political parties and, even within the party factions. Despite efforts to strengthen civil society and democracy in recent decades, Turkish politics today, still attracts great deal of criticism for neglecting human and political rights not only from the international community but also from the political leaders, the pressure groups and the media in Turkey.

Since the early 1980s the global trends in the direction of liberalisation and privatisation have had profound effects on all units of Turkish society. One of the consequences of the market-oriented economic policies has been the emergence of private broadcast channels. Until the 1990s, the state-run broadcaster, TRT, was the main provider of political information to the Turkish public. However, its news broadcasting has been under the influence of the political establishment and the government in power. With the arrival of private channels, both the content and the presentation of political news has changed considerably. In their coverage of political issues, private stations have included more diverse political views and interpretations and, thus, provided an alternative to the official definitions of the domestic political and economic events. Introducing a more dynamic, informal and populist style of reporting they have challenged the dry, long and serious discourse of TRT's news programmes. Soon this has earned commercial channels an unquestionable supremacy in the audience ratings as well as success in the advertising market. However, while TRT has been accused of being the

'voice of the state' private television channels have been criticised for promoting their own private interests and being overwhelmingly biased towards some political parties and pressure groups. This tendency has become apparent particularly on some of Star's news programmes and commentaries which reflected antagonism or favouritism toward certain political parties. On this point a reporter from Star commented that:

"For some time Star was very much fond of the Motherland Party (the main opposition party). Mesut Yilmaz (leader of the MP) was like Star's employed politician. Now he is Show TV's favourite... These days, we like Tansu Çiller (then Prime Minister)... Star and its companies need the support of the government because Turkey is going through an economic chaos".⁴

The relationship between the government, political parties and the big business interests of which many media companies are a part becomes more apparent on certain occasions. For instance, during the last general elections in December 1995 major media groups with liberal outlook seemed to lend their support to two main centre-right parties: True Path Party and Motherland Party. Before the elections, *Hürriyet* newspaper, owned by the Dogan Group which has stakes in Kanal D and Show TV, brought up an allegation concerning its major rival, the Medya Holdings. *Hürriyet* claimed that the Medya Holdings which owns ATV and *Sabah* newspaper sent a circular to ATV news department advising its personnel to give favourable coverage to the then ruling party, TPP, and not to dwell on allegations about the personal wealth of the then prime minister, Tansu Çiller, which, since she came to power, had been one of the issues threatening her political future. *Hürriyet* also alleged that this circular stated that the news both about Çiller's opponents within her party and about the opposition parties, particularly the MP and its leader Mesut Yilmaz would be given less coverage.⁵ In contrast to ATV, on Star's news programmes Çiller and her family were unsympathetically and adversely portrayed while the MP was positively represented. The ideologically oriented Islamic conservative channels, on the other hand, gave constant support to the values and policies of the

⁴. Recorded interview with a correspondent from Star, 15.7.1994.

⁵. *Hürriyet*, newspaper, 25.11.1995.

Welfare Party which was not welcomed by these mainstream channels. The left, which despite its decreasing votes in recent elections still holds its position as the second most important political force did not receive any backing from the broadcast media. (See Table 5.1) The leftist parties have been not only underrepresented but also misrepresented by some private channels. Particularly the Social Democratic Populist Party, which has been the major leftist party since 1983, and one of the coalition partners in the previous government was subject to Star's hostile campaign.

Table 5.1. General Election Results in 1991 and 1995.⁶

	December Seats	1995 % of votes	October Seats	1991 % of votes
Centre-Right Parties (TPP & MP)	267	38.9	293	49.5
Centre-Left Parties* (DLP & RPP)	125	25.3	95	30.5
Islamic Welfare Party	158	21.4	62	16.4
Nationalist Action Party**	0	8.2	0	0.0
Kurdish People's Democratic Party***	0	4.2	0	0.0
Others/Independents	0	2.1	0	3.6
Total	550	100.0	450	100.0

* In 1991, there were three centre-left parties; the SDPP, the DLP and the RPP. Then, in 1995, the SDPP merged with the RPP. ** In 1991, this party entered the elections by temporarily merging with the WP. *** In 1991, this party entered the elections by temporarily merging with SDPP.

It can be argued that by supporting centre right rather than centre left and the Islamists the mainstream media failed to adequately represent an important section of the political spectrum and the public opinion in Turkey. The main reason why the mainstream media supported centre right parties was their belief that their business interests would be best served by the liberal economic policies of these parties. However, looking at the results of the two consecutive elections in Turkey it can be seen that despite the covert

⁶ Figures are derived from *The Economist Intelligence Unit's Report on Turkey*, 1st quarter 1996 p.10.

and sometimes overt support of the mainstream media, centre right parties lost votes while Islamists managed to increase their share. This is not only because the support WP had from the Islamic press and television stations but the severity of the political and economic problems of the country which allowed WP to emerge as the only strong alternative to the centre right.

5.2. General Features of Domestic Political and Economic News

Early research has found that news tends to emphasize a narrow range of hard topics and actors: politics, or politics-by-other-means such as war and economics, mainly through the activities of decision-making elites.⁷ This is also a valid finding for the analysis of news programmes on both private and public television channels in Turkey. The content analysis of news stories showed that political information was predominant. The main categories of stories which appeared in the news programmes are shown in Table 5.2. The most immediately striking finding was that more than one quarter of the total length of all the news programmes on six television channels was devoted to political stories, both national and international. Although all channels were inclined to cover more national political issues than any other the amount of time given to the domestic political news on each channel showed differences. The time allocated to domestic political stories by TRT put this channel in front of the others. One of the main reasons for this is that the current TRT Law No: 2954 obliges the public broadcaster to give coverage to all political parties which have members in the parliament.⁸ As a result, political parties expect TRT to report their even the most routine press conferences or group meetings whether or not they have any particular news value.

⁷. See, Peter Golding and Philip Elliott, *Making the News*, London: Longman, 1979 and L. John Martin and R. Eldon Hiebert (eds.), *Current Issues in International Communication*, London: Longman, 1990.

⁸. Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) Law, No:2954, 1983.

Table 5.2. Percentage of News Stories by Topics

	ATV	Kanal D	Star	Show TV	TGRT	TRT 1
International Politics	8.45	8.91	10.88	11.43	23.08	23.90
Domestic Politics	29.82	40.62	28.34	29.88	25.79	50.49
Economy, Industry, Commerce	15.19	5.26	2.25	6.37	5.56	0.88
Military, Terrorism	12.56	14.52	15.20	18.96	15.90	9.02
Crime, Police, Judiciary	4.50	3.96	10.36	9.79	1.65	0.82
Disaster, Tragedy	0.83	3.07	2.50	0.00	1.24	1.93
Education	0.00	0.00	1.21	0.00	3.34	0.00
Culture, Art	5.14	1.57	0.97	4.89	2.16	1.52
Health	0.38	0.00	0.76	0.00	4.33	0.00
Science, Technology, Environment	7.06	1.05	3.08	2.20	1.66	4.98
Human Interest	13.03	17.06	19.68	12.66	8.91	1.64
Other News	3.04	3.98	4.77	3.82	6.38	4.82
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100

As far as the news items related to economy, commerce and industry are concerned, private television broadcasters seem to be more interested in these kind of news stories than TRT. The coverage of European Customs Union Treaty (ECUT) and its likely consequences on Turkish economic life and industry were given special attention by private television channels, particularly by ATV. This channel was also concerned with the 1995 state budget which was being discussed in the Parliament during the recording period. TRT was at the bottom of this category because it gave in-depth reporting neither to the ECUT nor to the state budget. Similarly, news about the increases in the prices and foreign currencies and rising inflation rate were given more air time by private television channels than they were by TRT.

Apart from economy, commerce and industry another category which featured more prominently on private television stations than they did on TRT was military and terrorism. The news items included in this category were related to civil wars in Bosnia and Chechenia as well as all other national and international incidents of political violence and terrorism. The portrayal of the terrorist deeds and organisation in news programmes have been investigated by a number of academic researchers.⁹ It was argued what make stories about terrorism newsworthy were their dramatic value as well as their uniqueness and timeliness. Moreover, whether the terrorist incident can be seen as an 'adventure' and whether or not the lives of those being informed would be affected were considered as other important factors which influenced the news coverage.¹⁰ Among all the channels under investigation Show TV had the highest amount of military and terrorism stories due to its extensive reporting of the war in Bosnia. In addition, the activities of the national military forces in south eastern provinces of Turkey and Northern Iraq, victims of the Kurdish conflict, bombings and killings in the large cities were also covered by all the news programmes under investigation.

It can be argued that the television news tends to reflect the picture of power structure in the society for most of the major actors appeared in the news programmes are of political nature. However, the amount of the attention these political actors received differed on each channel. When we compare TRT's political coverage with that of its private counterparts it is seen that a considerable amount of coverage were given to the president, prime minister and ruling parties. (Table 5.3.) One explanation of this tendency is that TRT prioritise news items not always according to their news value but to the bureaucratic distance of the events from the senior posts of the state hierarchy. This is, in fact, quite contrary to one of the principles of TRT's news broadcasting which does not allow "exaggerated protocol news reporting".¹¹ However, the executives and the

⁹. Philip Schlesinger, Graham Murdock, Philip Elliott, *Televising 'Terrorism': Political Violence in Popular Culture*, London: Comedia/Marion Boyars, 1983.

¹⁰. See David L. Paletz and P.Schmid (eds), *Terrorism and the Media*, London: Sage, 1992.

¹¹. TRT Annual Broadcasting and Programming Plan, TRT publications, 1994.

journalists I interviewed at TRT told me that the formal and informal political pressures on the organisation are still so strong that they are not able to change the existing pattern of political news reporting. During the recording period of the present analysis TRT gave extensive coverage to President Süleyman Demirel's official visits to the Islam Conference in Casablanca and to Portugal. Thus, in TRT's news programmes with 24.24% the President clearly emerged as the main political actor. Private television stations in general, on the other hand, devoted much less air time to stories involving the President. Show TV gave no coverage to the President.

Table 5.3. Percentage of Main Actors in Domestic News Stories

	ATV	Kanal D	Star	Show TV	TGRT	TRT 1
President	1.32	1.37	2.94	0.00	2.87	24.24
Parliament	14.27	7.10	14.64	15.97	2.56	8.84
Prime Minister	5.42	5.79	4.67	5.28	1.83	12.53
Government	23.68	9.46	14.81	11.33	11.13	11.34
Ruling Parties	6.50	7.92	2.93	5.02	6.22	9.92
Opposition Parties	1.69	13.78	1.90	10.79	15.67	20.35
Local Government	2.19	1.64	2.46	1.94	7.98	0.00
Military, Terrorists	5.57	6.26	7.19	11.30	1.45	4.03
Criminals, Police	9.57	5.84	10.37	18.03	2.25	2.00
Labour Unions, Workers	3.78	8.05	2.87	2.69	2.19	2.03
Industrialist, Businessmen	0.88	3.49	9.86	0.72	10.30	1.57
Other Interest Groups	6.17	7.74	5.08	3.39	9.22	1.55
Experts	3.43	4.34	0.00	0.00	10.45	0.72
Celebrities	13.43	9.49	9.10	12.37	2.03	0.88
Ordinary People	2.10	7.73	11.18	1.17	13.85	0.00
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100

There were again discrepancies among different channels with regard to the emphasis they placed on government stories. In fact, it was not TRT, but a private channel, ATV, which had the highest proportion of government news. On this category ATV was followed by Star with 14.81%. While TRT news did not seem to be giving more coverage to government news than its private rivals the same was not true for the category of prime minister. The amount of the time prime minister was given by TRT news was at least twice as much that of most private stations. Similarly, TRT gave more air time to stories about ruling and opposition parties than any other channel under investigation. Another visible difference between TRT and private channels concerning the coverage of government and ruling parties was that the commercial media seemed more interested in the internal conflicts and troubles within the cabinet and ruling parties than TRT.

If we combine the categories of prime minister, government and ruling parties under the heading of 'the government' while considering opposition parties as 'the opposition', the representation of political power by Turkish television news can be addressed from a broader perspective. (Table 5.4) As far as the reporting of the government was concerned, ATV had the leading position (35.60%) while TRT came second with only a small margin of difference (33.79%).

Table 5.4. Percentage of the government and the opposition stories

	ATV	Kanal D	Star	Show TV	TGRT	TRT 1
The Government	35.60	23.17	22.41	21.63	19.18	33.79
The Opposition	1.69	13.78	1.90	10.79	15.67	20.35

However, on some private channels such as ATV and Star there was huge differences between the government and the opposition categories. While some private channels showed very little interest in the opposition they did not in general give much

less coverage to the government than TRT did. Therefore, the coverage of opposing political forces on TRT was more balanced than it was on some private channels. Although private channels do not have a stable political preference some of them seem to be pro-government while some support a particular political party. This, as well as influencing the presentation of the political news, determines the selection and the proportion of story categories and actors.

It was also interesting to pin down a general trend that businessmen, industrialists and the managerial staff of major companies were given more voice by private television channels than they were by the TRT. (Table 5.3) Despite the criticism of many journalists and media scholars the global tendency in the direction of free market economy has become one of the characteristics of contemporary journalism and news production not only in Turkey but also all over the world. The integration of the mainstream media into the core sectors of commerce led business organizations to seek the ways of influencing the environment in which they operate. Moreover, as a result of the enhanced relations with business circles the media have become more conscious of the market relations than ever.¹² Today private media in Turkey have affiliations with major holdings, banks and companies which have large investments and involvements in the economic life of the country. Here this was reflected in the relatively high percentages of broadcasting time allocated to business and commercial sector on some private channels like Star and TGRT. In addition to news stories in which certain businessmen or managers of large corporations were the main actors, some news items gave access to business circles to present their views on much wider issues concerning the economy such as the negotiations for customs union agreement with the EU and the 1995 state budget.

As far as the classification of news stories according to main actors are concerned we can make some further observations in relation to the reporting of trade unions which are one of the strongest interest groups in Turkey. During the recording period there were preparations among public sector workers and civil servants for either industrial actions or

¹². John H. McManus, *Market-Driven Journalism*, California: Sage, 1994.

one-day demonstrations for increased wages and to demand more social rights. However, these stories received much less coverage than, for example, the categories of criminals or celebrities on all private television channels. Another striking finding on the coverage of labour unions was the complete absence of background news on Star which reported only the rally of public sector workers on the 17th of December. Neither the calls by public sector workers for another one-day industrial action on 20th December nor stories concerning the trade unions and workers were taken up by Star. Similarly, TRT, Show TV, ATV and TGRT gave little attention to the press meetings of public service workers and their background news on these events was less than satisfactory. Therefore, it can be argued that despite the increase in the number of channels television news in Turkey still fails to provide their audience with accurate and adequate information and background to make decisions on important political and economic affairs. It is also interesting to note that TRT reported the activities of labour unions only when they expressed their views on other political issues such as privatisation and new Anti-Terrorism Law but did not seem to show the same interest in their press conferences about the demonstrations of public service workers. With 8.05% Kanal D gave the highest amount of coverage to the demands and the actions of public service workers.

While considering these findings within a broader socio-economic context two important points concerning the relationships between the trade unions and the media in Turkey should be made. First is related to the coverage of trade unions by the media. TURK-IS, the largest labour unions confederation which represents some 85% of the workers claims that the media gives more attention to the views of business circles and the capital than that of trade unions. The dissatisfaction with the coverage of labour unions and workers by news media led TURK-IS to consider even establishing its own television station.¹³ The second point is the relationship between the trade unions and the media institutions. In general, personnel policies of newspapers discourages journalists from joining to trade unions and attempts to create a host of unsyndicated media workers.

¹³. *Milliyet*, newspaper, 21.4.1994.

Most private channels too seemed to have adopted this anti-unionist stance. In some cases it is argued that the policies of some private stations such as Star reflect the openly hostile attitude of their proprietors towards unions. The Uzan family, the owner of Star and Rumeli Holdings do not allow their workers to be involved with any trade unions.¹⁴ However, up to this day these problems remain as gossip among the journalists and receive very little, if any, attention from the media itself.¹⁵ These issues are discussed in more detail within the context of chapter three which examines the current legal framework and working conditions for Turkish journalists.

5.3. Case Studies

In the following sections of this chapter I will investigate how important domestic issues in political and economic agenda are portrayed by television news. The news coverage of the Customs Union agreement between Turkey and the European Union and the demonstration of the civil servants will be analysed in terms of their visual and verbal narratives. The analysis will be focused on which aspects of the stories were taken up and on how they were presented.

5.3.1. Relations Between European Union and Turkey

For the Turkish political elites at the center, the application for the full membership of European Community is a logical culmination of the 150 year old westernisation drive. Following the Second World War, when the democratic countries of Europe emerged as the victors, and when Turkey felt threatened by the Soviet Union it was not difficult for her to vie for the Western club. She eventually joined NATO, OECD and the European Council as a full member after a gruesome period of negotiations and deliberations by the Western European members of those organisations. Turkey was seen as an essential plank in NATO's defence until the demise of the Soviet Union and is still

¹⁴. *Hürriyet*, newspaper, 8.10.1993.

¹⁵. For a detailed information on why the problems of media workers are not given coverage by the media, see *Cumhuriyet*, newspaper, 29.11.1994.

regarded as a vital pillar of the relative stability in the Middle East, as demonstrated by the 1991 Gulf War. Since the 1960s closer economic links have already been established between the EC and Turkey. Today over one million Turks are employed in the EU states which supply 50% of Turkey's direct investment, 40% of her imports and take 35% of her exports. Turkey is potentially very rich in energy sources and minerals. Therefore, it is politically and economically important for the Community interests.¹⁶

The relationship between Turkey and the EC is a long-standing one, dating back almost to the inception of the Community. The relationship is embodied in the 1963 Association Agreement which envisaged that Turkey would eventually become a full member of the EC. In 1987 Turkey made a formal application for full membership. The Community's response was lukewarm: membership remained the long-term aim, but the immediate proposals were for an interim arrangement of closer co-operation.

From the point of view of the EC the obstacles for Turkey's full membership were varied. First of all, the unstable political and economic structure in Turkey poses serious problems. From an economic perspective, despite the positive developments in the Turkish economy in the 1980s, the economic contrast between Turkey and the EC remains large. The Turkish economy continues to exhibit some crucial problems, such as low level of income and social standards, backwardness of economic structure, high inflation rates, massive foreign debts and high industrial protection.¹⁷ The GNP per capita in Turkey is only about one third of the GNP per capita in Greece. Therefore, the EC fears that an aid programme to bring Turkey up to the Community levels would have to be so vast that it would be unthinkable. Furthermore, the issue of Turkish migrant workers in the Community has clouded relations. By 1980 there were 714.000 Turkish guest workers in Europe. The total number of Turks in Germany alone by 1990 numbered 1.5 million.¹⁸

¹⁶. See Canan Balkir and Allan M. Williams (eds.) *Turkey and Europe*, 1993; Werner Gumpel, *Turkey and the European Community*, 1992.

¹⁷. Robert C. Hine, Turkey and the European Community: Regional Integration and Economic Convergence, in *The Economy of Turkey Since Liberalization*, S. Togan and V.N. Balasubramanyam (eds.), London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1996, pp.131-154.

¹⁸. Keith Perry, *Business and the EU*, London: Butterworth-Heinemann Ltd., 1994, p.249.

Two recessions in Europe in the 1980s and in the early 1990s with the attendant high unemployment have led to strict controls on the influx of guest workers. Therefore, the magnitude of potential Turkish labour mobility presented another problem for the EC. It was argued that if Turkey were to join the EC, the implications of the right to free movement for Turkish workers across the Community would be immense given the fact that the Turks, now numbering 60 million, are expected to be the second largest nation in Europe by the year 2000. Tariff-free, cheaper Turkish manufactures especially in such labour-intensive sectors, such as textiles, leather goods and processed food, would present serious competition to European industries and threaten jobs. Huge increases in Turkish agricultural surpluses, once the South Anatolian Project (GAP) enters production in the 1990s, would also conflict seriously with the common agricultural policy of the EC.

Other obstacles in Turco-Community relations are also political and indeed psychological. On both sides there are doubts whether Turkey is in fact a European country and therefore eligible to accede to the Treaty of Rome. Moreover, the unresolved matter over the future of Cyprus causes conflict between Greece and Turkey. Although the Community claimed that it would avoid becoming a party to the disputes between both sides the Greek entry to the EC in 1981 had serious consequences for Turkey for Greece has the right to veto decisions affecting Turkey, including application for full membership. On the other hand, the political turmoil of the 1970s, and the military rule between 1980 and 1983 prevented Turkey from being considered for full membership by the European Community. For the last ten years, the Islamist fundamentalist movements and the Kurdish problem have constituted further problems between the EU and the subsequent Turkish governments. These raised again the questions whether Turkey could enter constructively into EC membership given its Islamic traditions and human rights record. Besides, the addition of East European states to the list of the countries seeking EC membership has effectively ended Turkey's hopes to enter the Community in the near future.

Thus, instead of full membership, the EC proposed to Turkey a Customs Union agreement which has been negotiated for almost ten years. However, as a result of the

some European MPs' protests about Turkey's poor human rights record and a Greek veto, the Turkish-EU Association meeting which gathered in December 1994 failed to sign the Customs Union agreement. One year later, the European Parliament voted to approve the creation of a Customs Union between the EU and Turkey on the condition that the country's human rights record is monitored. In the meantime, to secure the European Parliament's ratification of the Customs Union then Turkish government withdrew some articles in the Anti-Terrorism Law and released six of the former DeP MPs from prison. The governments of the main European Union (EU) member states, France, Germany, Britain and Italy, are in favour of the implementation of the Customs Union, on the grounds that if it is rejected by the EP Turkey may cease to cooperate with the Western powers on issues such as the Balkans and Iraq. The rejection would also strengthen the voice of pro-Islamist forces in Turkey, just when the west European governments are perturbed by the threat of Islamist extremist movements in countries such as Algeria and Egypt.

Under the agreement, which came into force on 1 January 1996, both sides are required to remove tariffs affecting the other's industrial products. The EC predicts that Customs Union will help double EU exports to Turkey over five years and will increase investment in Turkey. Moreover, the Customs Union is expected to result in more than 600 million pounds of EU aid to Turkey, as well as giving the country trading advantages.

5.3.2. European Customs Union on Television News

The first case study focuses on the television news coverage of the EU meetings on Turkey's entry to the Customs Union which took place during the period of the present study. This analysis aims to shed light on how Turkish television channels portrayed the European Customs Union Treaty and what kind of information they provided to the Turkish audience. How did different channels represent the advantages and disadvantages of the Customs Union for the Turkish economy? What explanations did they offer for the European Parliament's rejection of Turkey's entry to the Customs Union? How did news

reports portray the views of the general public, politicians, government and businessmen in relation to the Customs Union agreement?

The news stories on the Customs Union were revolving around two main themes. While some news stories gave special attention to the economic aspects of the Customs Union others were more concerned with the daily meetings and the decisions of the EU, and the political reasons behind Europe's reluctance to accept Turkey's membership.

5.3.2.1. Pros and Cons of the European Customs Union

The dominant political and economic view, which has influenced the public opinion in Turkey for the last 10 years, put more emphasis on the advantages rather than disadvantages of the EU membership and the Customs Union. Different sections and classes within the society, including industrialists, businessmen, tradesmen, craftsmen, farmers and workers expect that Turkey's integration with Europe would result in more export, production, and job opportunities with better income prospects. These hopes have been so influential that Turkey's membership to the EU's Customs Union has become a prime national objective. Therefore, on 15 December 1995, when the EC ratified the Customs Union with Turkey, the headlines of the major newspapers exclaimed that "we are European at last," and "the dream of the century came true".¹⁹

The secular elite in Turkey have a feeling of admiration towards the Western world, but they are equally resentful of its superiority.²⁰ The feeling of mistrust and suspicion mixed with an aspiration to be westernised, is shared by Rightists and Leftists, secularists and Islamists, liberals and conservatives. The opposition to Turkey's affiliation with the EC comes mainly from two political groups: the nationalist left and the Islamic right. The first line of the opposition originates from Islamist groups who argue that Turkey's place should not be sought in the Christian Western world but in the Islamic

¹⁹. *Milliyet* and *Hürriyet*, newspapers, 15.12.1995.

²⁰. See Sahin Alpay, 'Journalists: Cautious Democrats', in Metin Heper, Ayse Oncu, Heinz Kramer (eds.) *Turkey and the West: Changing Political and Cultural Identities*, London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1993, 69-91, and Banu Helvacioğlu, ' "Allahu Ekber", We are Turks: Yearning for a Different Homecoming at the Periphery of Europe', in *Third World Quarterly*, 1996, Vol: 17(3): 503-523.

sphere. Therefore, prior to the ratification of the Customs Union the pro-Islamist Welfare Party claimed that the Customs Union was against the Turkish Constitution because the society was not consulted about it. The WP campaigned for the rejection of Customs Union with the EU on the grounds that Turkey was excluded from many future decisions pertaining to its own trade regime because, as a non-EU member, it could not vote on EU trade policy but it would be obliged to observe it. The secular nationalist left, on the other hand, does not oppose Turkey's involvement in Europe but it criticises the specific policies which have been pursued by the governments. This perspective argues that the Customs Union should only be considered within the context of full membership to the EU otherwise the Customs Union would be a sacrifice for Turkey in terms of both politics and economy. The supporters of this line are also critical of the privatisation policies of the government on the similar grounds that it has been implemented without thorough research and public debate. Therefore, in relation to the Customs Union nationalist left argued that the public had not been adequately informed by the government on the possible negative consequences for the Turkish economy.

For the government, however, the Customs Union has meant more political prestige, and a prerequisite for the prosperity of the economy. Therefore, the ruling parties seemed reluctant to mention the possible risks of the Customs Union. The Minister of State, Aykon Dogan, who was in charge of the economic affairs said that:

"If we mentioned the negative aspects of the Customs Union in our European agenda, we would lose the support of the public."²¹

With the Customs Union all protectionist measures will be abolished and Turkish industry will have to operate in a more competitive environment. One of the obligations of the Customs Union is that Turkey has to adopt the EU's commercial policy. This also means that, like other member countries, Turkey has to ensure some economic and trade legislation, such as competition law. Therefore, Turkey is required to sustain the

²¹. *Cumhuriyet*, newspaper, 30.11.1995.

macroeconomic stability in order to overcome the new challenges caused by its integration with the European market.

Within this framework, one of the risks of the Customs Union for Turkish economy is that, due to the increased competition, more investment will be needed. As a result, Turkish industry will lose certain market share and profit margins. Only the companies which are able to overcome these will survive. A recent research indicated that the impact of the Customs Union with the EU will be more severe on small and medium enterprises.²² Second is the production technology transfer which will increase Turkey's technological dependence on the western countries. Third, it has been estimated that there will be an explosion in imports. When the custom tariffs will be removed the European goods will be sold with affordable prices and be able to compete with domestic products. Since small and medium companies and State Economic Enterprises are not competitive their products will shift in favour of imports, causing serious threats to domestic goods. Besides, some economists warn that the increase in the imported goods might create another foreign exchange crisis and massive foreign debt unless other barriers, like stamp duty or taxes on certain goods replace the custom duties.²³

Having summarised different viewpoints surrounding Turkey's political and economic engagement with the EC, let me now turn to how these perspectives were represented on television news. Most mainstream channels devoted a great deal of time to the economic aspect, particularly to the advantages of the Customs Union whereas TGRT and TRT gave no background information on the likely impact of Turkey's economic integration with Europe on the domestic sectors. Among all channels, ATV was the only channel which gave special attention to the impact of the Customs Union on the economic life of the country. On ATV there were four long items focusing on four different economic sectors; textile, food, medicine and durables such as television sets, fridges, washing machines which included interviews with experts and ordinary people. These

²². Alpay Filiztekin, *Competitiveness of Turkish SMSEs in the Customs Union*, Istanbul: Koç University, unpublished research report, 1996.

²³. Robert C. Heine, in *op.cit.*, 1996, pp. 131-154.

reports were extended by the results of a survey by SONAR, a public opinion research company. At present, Turkey has large numbers of market and public opinion research firms based mainly in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir.²⁴ The television channels often use the surveys and opinion polls conducted by these firms on various political and other important issues.

The narrative of the ATV's special reports on the Customs Union followed a similar pattern. First the correspondent talks to the experts, the representative of chambers and businessmen on the impact of the Customs Union on their specific sector. Then, she finishes each story interviewing ordinary people in the streets. This last section of the film report tends to contain a human interest element. Let's look at one of these reports in more detail. In the following example the newscaster mentions SONAR's survey results at the beginning of the item to develop specific themes. The figures derived from the survey seem to be inserted to the report in order to emphasize the advantages of the Custom Union. A careful reading of the opening paragraph and the film report shows that the choice of tools to present the impact of the Customs Union on the Turkish economy reinforces the dominant view while underemphasizing the alternative opinions. The advantages are told by ATV's newscaster. The use of direct institutional voice gives the impression that "reality simply appears through them".²⁵ On the other hand, the negative effects are presented by indirect statements of the people who are critical of the Customs Union. It can be argued that this aims to 'distance' and to 'disown' these views:²⁶

Newscaster: "As we approach 19 December what are the opinion of the people on the street? 80% percent of the people who live in two big cities are supporting the Customs Union. But, why? Here is the answer."

Film (voice over): "The rising prices have always been one of our biggest worry. Behind the people's support for the Customs Union lies this concern again. According to the survey carried out by SONAR in Istanbul and Ankara the biggest

²⁴. Nermin Abadan-Unat, Market Research and Public Opinion Polling in Turkey as an agent of social change, in Mübeccel Kiray (ed) Structural Change in Turkish Society, USA: Indiana University Turkish Studies, No:10, 1991, pp.179-192.

²⁵. John Hartley, *Understanding News*, London: Routledge, 1982, p. 110.

²⁶. Allan Bell, *The Language of News Media*, Oxford UK: Blackwell, 1991, p. 208.

expectation of the citizens from the Customs Union is that the prices will decrease.

Graphics (voice over): What will the Customs Union bring?: Prices will decrease 28.9%, [Turkish] products will find new markets 17.3%, No idea/No answer 9.2%.

Film (voice over): "What about the opposing minority?"

Old man: "This is a deceit."

Correspondent: "Why?"

Old man: "I do not believe that they are going to make us a member [to the Customs Union]."

Film (voice over): "To the people who are against the Customs Union the most important problem is that the Turkish products will not be able to cope with the increasing competition and so the Turkish economy will collapse."

Graphics (voice over): What will the Customs Union bring?: Full membership to the EC 11.6 %, Turkey will become stronger 17.3 %, Capitulations will return 5.3 %, Our economy will collapse 10.2 %.

Film (voice over): "So, the biggest worry of the people who do not support the Customs Union is that the domestic market will be shaken."

Graphics (voice over): Why do you not support the Customs Union?: It will affect the domestic market 48%, I do not trust Europe 16%, It is not suitable for our interests 4%, Other 32%.

Newscaster: "The Customs Union will not only influence the industrial sector but every part of our life, our kitchen, our table. *First of all, it will bring quality to the food we consume.* But, will the prices go down?"

Film (voice over): "As the threat of famine is growing in the world, food products are becoming the most important items in trade for the states and the international companies. And one of the sectors which will be affected by our entry to the Customs Union is the food sector."

Then the correspondent talks to the president of the Food Retailers Association and few other experts and businessmen in the sector. The views of the interviewees are in favour of the Customs Union. They argue that "*the economy will recover*" and "*the prices will decrease*", therefore "*the consumers will benefit from the advantages of the Customs Union*". Between the interviews we hear the comments of the correspondent that "*Turkish farmers will open to the world markets... The producers in the food market are not afraid of the competition with other states.*" In the meantime, the viewers are told by the two titles juxtaposed on the EC flag that "*we should definitely enter the Customs Union*" and

"people will have cheap and quality product". Then she tells us that "But the people are already fed up. They do not care about the Customs Union. They are struggling to feed themselves." Then, the report concludes with the interviews of ordinary people in the street, inserting human interest element to the item:

A man: We do not buy anything, we only have soup and bread.

An old man: If I did not have a child to look after me I would be on the streets. Because I am a pensioner and only get 3 million liras a month.

Another old man: The Customs Union will open more doors for the already rich.

A street hawker: It will not bring anything because of, you know, the illegal business in the country.

Correspondent: Do you know what the Customs Union mean?

The street hawker: To tell you the truth, I don't.

Correspondent (laughing): So, why do you make such comments on something that you do not know?

The view that the Customs Union would increase competition in the domestic sector, bringing quality and lower prices received favourable coverage from other mainstream channels as well. On Show TV there was only one film report concerning the impact of the agreement on Turkish economy. This news report is a good illustration of how liberal mainstream media reflect the views which are generally associated with the free market ideologies. When we look at the last sentence, we see how technology transfer, which is considered to be one of the risks of the Customs Union is presented as an advantage:

Newscaster: "...What will happen if everything goes all right? Here are the advantages that the Customs Union will bring us."

Film (voice over): "...First, as consumers we will be supplied with quality and cheap products. The KITs (State Economic Enterprises), which, for years, have provided us limited variety of products will disappear. We will be able to buy better quality foreign products with cheaper prices. The cars are expected to be cheaper. Due to the competition with foreign companies the domestic firms will increase the quality of their products. This will be to the advantage of the industrialists. The firms which produce for the domestic market work with very high costs. Besides they are not working with full capacity. (With the Customs

Union) As they will produce for a bigger market they will work full capacity and reduce the costs. *The Customs Union also means transfer of technology to the country. The research and development activities, which have always been inadequate in Turkey will increase. With the new technologies and the know-how coming from Europe, it will be easier for the domestic firms to open up to international markets.*"

(Show TV, 15.12.1994)

On the following day, Show TV had an interview with an MP from Motherland Party, İlhan Kesici, on the likely outcomes of the Customs Union. There are interesting points regarding the structure and the flow of this interview. The interview is an example of the structuring of information around a very narrow range of explanations which seemed to be shared by the interviewee and the interviewer. The interview takes place in the studio during the news programme and the questions are asked by the newscaster:

Newscaster: "You were the deputy permanent representative of Turkey for the EC between 1984-1987. You also served as undersecretary of state in the DPT (State Planning Organization). So, you are the expert of the subject matter and that's why we have invited you here. I am asking you as an ordinary citizen, how will I benefit from the Customs Union?"

Kesici: "First, you will be able to buy foreign-brand clothes cheaper. This will be very good for the Turkish economy, but of course if Turkey has enough foreign currency to import these goods."

Newscaster: "I suppose, this will increase the competition."

Kesici: "Yes, the export goods will be free of custom tariffs. And, possibly there will be an increase in foreign investment... It will also be a step forward to the full-membership to the EU. ...It will be useful for the domestic economic mechanisms including the competition. Besides, the restrictions on our textile industry will be removed...On the other hand, there are aspects of the Customs Union which will create some difficulties for our economy."

The newscaster makes no attempt to take up this point raised by Kesici in his last sentence by which he attempts to spell out the risks of the agreement. On the contrary, she makes no reference to the disadvantages of the Customs Union and on her next question, she changes the subject.

Newscaster: "Meanwhile, there are some rumours among the people that the European Parliament is refusing the Customs Union, that Greece will use its right

to veto, and that this is related to the DeP trial and human rights abuses. But, the prime minister says that we will definitely enter. Some says that it does not matter if we enter or not. Are these all related each to other? Can the DeP trial be connected to the Customs Union?"

Kesici: "In my opinion, they are not connected. Our entry to the Customs Union is an automatic process and it should not go to the EP to be accepted. Greece does not have the right to veto our entry to the Customs Union, but our membership to the EU. It is only trying to prevent it. There is no relation between Turkey's entry to the Customs Union and the DeP trial, human rights or democratisation. But, of course this does not mean that Turkey can postpone democratisation..."

Newscaster: "I am asking since you are the expert of the issue. Can we enter to the Customs Union?"

Kesici: "There is no reason why Turkey should not enter the Customs Union if the government produces right policies and establishes necessary contacts."

Kanal D, on the other hand, introduces the audience to a new 'problem' brought about by the Customs Union, which was mentioned neither by other television channels nor the press during the sample week. The eco-label is one of the requirements of the EU's economic policies in order to ensure the environmental protection by the firms trading in Europe. However, as can be seen from the report it is presented as a barrier for the Turkish business:

Newscaster: "With the Customs Union agreement the quota on the textile industry will be replaced by another obstacle: Eco-label."

Subtitle: The Eco-label Obstacle

Film (voice over): "Yes, the quota will be removed but *the eco-label, which is worse than quota is coming*. This patent label is given to the companies which care about the ecological balance. The firms which do not have filters and which give harm to the environment and the human health will not be given this label. These firms will not be able to sell their products. *First the quota, then the Customs Union veto, now the ecological label. The Europe is playing with us like the cat playing with the mouse.*"

(Kanal D, 16.12.1994)

Here it is worth noting that this item reappears on Show TV the following day with almost same context and pictures. However, in the later report the eco-label is described as "*threat*" instead of "*obstacle*".

5.3.2.2. Human Rights, Economy and Diplomacy

During the sample period, the meetings of the EU and diplomatic efforts of the Turkish government for the Customs Union were given prominent coverage on all television channels. However, the coverage of the main issues raised during the negotiations between the EU and Turkey showed significant variations according to the general political stance of the channels. The dominant theme was the concerns of Western countries and international organisations with the Turkish government's policy towards the Kurdish problem and the prison sentences of the deputies of pro-Kurdish Democracy Party (DeP). The trial of eight ex-DeP MPs ended on 8 December 1994. Five of them were sentenced to long prison terms under anti-terrorist legislation, which used to make it illegal to express support for or have any contact with any terrorist organisation. The sentences provoked sharp criticisms from Turkey's western allies. The US government announced that it was "deeply disturbed" by the verdicts. Equally crucial for Turkey was the reaction of the EU which openly deplored the verdicts. The liberal mainstream television channels devoted considerable level of attention to the criticisms on the human rights issue, which was represented as one of the main reasons threatening Turkey's entry to the Customs Union. The liberal secularist circles and mainstream media have been generally in favour of Turkey's integration with Europe mainly for the political reasons. The EC is considered as a guarantee for the stability of Turkey's fragile democratic regime and human rights.

Star's report on 12 December focused on the reaction of the European Union towards the DeP and connected the Turkish government's *"tensional"* mood to *"the EU's increasing political concern on the DeP"*. The following day, Show TV's news programme opened with four subsequent news items which dealt with similar themes. However, these reports presented more alarming facts:

Newscaster: "The US warns Turkey. Today in his visit to the Turkish Foreign Ministry the American ambassador in Ankara said that the US government is deeply worried about the human right abuses in Turkey and the sentences of the

former DeP MPs. Ankara, which has got used to the similar criticisms from Europe is very much disturbed because this is the strongest reaction it has ever received from the US. America demands Turkey to behave prudently with its military operations in the south east."

(Show TV, 13.12.1994)

This story carries on with the US ambassadors further criticisms on human rights and Turkish government's policy on the Kurdish issue and it also reports a possible embargo:

Film (voice over): "Diplomatic sources warns that these kind of messages imply an unofficial note. Same sources say that these developments might result in an embargo."

Show TV's report also mentions the criticisms of the EU about human rights in Turkey:

Newscaster: "It is not only the US which causes headache for Turkey on the south east problem and human rights. Ankara is having difficult days in terms of its relations with the EU. The Turkish government, which received a denunciation from the EU last week is worried about the EU meeting on 19 December in Brussels."

(Show TV, 13.12.1994)

The same item which reflected a state of despair seemed to imply that the verdict for the former DeP deputies could not come in a worse time than just before the negotiations for the Customs Union.

Film (voice over): "Turkey was working hard to improve the human rights but the verdicts of the DeP trial raised further difficulties for everything. Turkey is going to negotiate for its membership to the EU but there is no time and the crisis is growing."

Similarly, ATV covered the DeP issue as one the main problems for Turkey's entry into the Customs Union:

Film (voice over): "Turkey is counting down for the Customs Union, and at the same time she is trying to repair the damage caused by the DeP trial. The EU is very much annoyed by the verdicts on the DeP MPs. But Turkey is saying the same thing: 'We see no connection between the DeP trial, human rights and the Customs Union negotiations. We cannot accept any questioning of the independence of our judiciary'." (ATV, 14.12.1994)

In another report ATV broadcast fragments from an old film footage from the DeP trial and called the trial as Turkey's "*new problem*" :

Film voice over: "The negotiations on 19 December might be postponed. This is because of *the DeP trial, the worst headache of Turkey so far*. The timing of the verdicts was, perhaps, unfortunate for Turkey."

However, at the end of the same report we hear the response of Ferhat Ataman, the spokesman of the Foreign Ministry to the EU on the DeP issue:

Film (voice over): "Ferhat Ataman said that it was Turkish people who elected the DeP MPs. He commented that committing a crime by hiding behind the votes of the people is clearly a disrespectful behaviour. ...Ataman also stated that the DeP MPs were sentenced not because of their Kurdish ethnic origin, or that they defended Kurdish identity but because they collaborated with the terrorist organisation (PKK)."

(ATV, 15.12.1994)

On 14 December 1994 a Kurdish lawyer, Faik Candan, who disappeared in Ankara for two weeks was found shot dead. The body of Candan was discovered near the town of Bala, where there is a military base. Star was the only channel which referred to the Customs Union while reporting this incident. Star's reports argued that this and a few other mysterious murders, and torture allegations brought "*dark clouds*" over "*human rights, economy and diplomacy*" in Turkey:

Newscaster: "These murders and human rights abuses are the obstacles Turkey has to face in her relations with Europe."

(Star, 14.12.1994)

In one of the news reports on Kanal D, the pessimism seemed to be replaced by resentment. The intonation of the newscaster while reading the opening sentence gave the impression that Kanal D disapproves of the reactions and accusations by Western countries. However, at the end of the report there was a warning.

Newscaster: "*The accusations are always same: 'Turkey is abusing human rights'.*"

Film (voice over): "Because of human rights abuses the US threatened Turkey with an arms embargo. If we do not give a second thought to these *accusations* Turkey will be alone in the future."

(Kanal D, 17.12.1994)

The Greek veto was reported as another major obstacle for Turkey's entry to the Customs Union. Star mentioned the demands of Greece and explained how these demands would put more burden on the strategic and political situation of Turkey. In another news report Star described Greece as "*our traditional enemy*". It mentioned a possible Greek veto with a tone of bitterness and resentment:

Film (voice over): "It is difficult to convince Greece, which does not make any concessions in its demands."

(Star, 14.12.1994)

Film (voice over): "The biggest obstacles for Ankara are *the uncompromising attitude of Greece* and the criticisms on human rights which reached its climax with the DeP trial."

(Star, 15.12.1994)

On the other hand, Kanal D reemphasized the human rights issue before the film report presented the consequences of the EP's decision:

Newscaster: "It seems that the DeP trial will be a long-term problem for Turkey in her relations with Europe. The imprisonment of the DeP MPs has been more successful than the Greek veto in terms of risking the Customs Union agreement."

(Kanal D, 15.12.1994)

However, the following news item focused on the reactions of the business sector towards the Greek veto. The story opened with an explicit disappointment and resentment towards Greece:

Newscaster: "19 December is one of the most important days in Turkish history. because the fate of the 70 years of westernisation dream will be determined on 19 December. However, *Greece is creating difficulties, as it always did*. By claiming that Turkey is not a civil state it puts pressure on the EU to cancel the Customs Union agreement."

(Kanal D, 15.12.1994)

In an attempt to prevent a possible rejection of the Customs Union, the then Turkish prime minister, Tansu Çiller met the EU ambassadors in Ankara and telephoned the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and the EU trade commissioner, Leon Brittan. However, on 15 December, the EP members voted by a majority of 145 to 87 in support of a resolution proposing the halting of the tasks on the Customs Union and the postponement of the planned Association meeting on 19 December. In the aftermath of the EP's negative decision, some mainstream television channels seemed furious with the government and the politicians for not having done enough for Turkey's entry to the Customs Union:

Film (voice over): "What was the mistake? Why did the 30 years of story come to an end like this? In the first place, it seems that the present government and the Foreign Ministry is responsible... Human rights issue has been a trouble for Turkey since the 12 September 1980 [military] regime, and [the government] tried to solve this problem in just two days. Can this impress the West which cannot understand the imprisonment of the DeP MPs? This is another question. What about the Parliament? Can it make the laws which are necessary for Turkey's entry to the Customs Union, and for lifting the economy to the European standards... Yes, perhaps the 50th government was incapable. But, are the hands of the previous governments, which did not follow the necessary procedures for Turkey's entry to the Customs Union more clean?"

(Star, 16.12.1994)

ATV described Çiller's efforts as *"belated diplomacy attempts"*. On the other hand, Show TV questioned the likely impact of the postponement decision of the EP on the Customs Union on Turkey's relations with Europe, though it did not make any comment on the policies of the government concerning the agreement. It is also interesting to note how such an important issue can form the content of a soft news item which excludes political facts while placing greater emphasis on human interest aspect. The following report on Show TV likened the bad weather conditions and snow in the Turkish capital city to the worsening situation in Customs Union front:

Newscaster: "There is snow in Ankara. The snow, like a white duvet covered both the dirty streets and the Customs Union agreement. The hopes are postponed to

another spring. There is nobody in the [Foreign] Ministry today. Everybody is trying to do something about the negotiations in Brussels."

Film (voice over): "This morning Ankara woke up with sudden snow. In few hours everywhere has become white. But it is not only the streets of Ankara which are under the snow but also the hopes of Turkey for the Customs Union..."

(Show TV, 16.12.1994)

The correspondent put a good deal of imagination to make such routine, yet important political issue dramatic and, verbally and visually interesting:

Correspondent (on location): "The situation is worrying but there is nobody [in Europe] to open the door for Turkey. *The worse thing is that it snowed too much on Ankara's hopes for Europe. And, we have made a snowball. Now it is the diplomats' duty to turn this snowball into an avalanche...*The snow is thawing now, but it still snows. The weathercast for the Customs Union predicts that it is cloudy and snowy until Monday."

Some news stories reported the reactions of the businessmen towards the European Parliament when it decided to postpone the Customs Union negotiations with Turkey:

Newscaster: "The Turkish businessmen and industrialists worried because of the decision of the EP to postpone the Customs Union agreement between the EC and Turkey."

In the interviews with the presidents of Istanbul Trade Chamber (ITO) and Istanbul Industry Chamber (ISO) both criticised the decision of the EP and express their reactions towards the EP's criticism on Turkey's human rights record. However, in the voice over of the correspondent we were also told that:

Film (voice over of the correspondent): "The members of the ITO emphasized that the delay in Turkey's membership to the EC mean the delay in the human rights and democratisation."

(Star, 16.12.1994)

In the following item, we hear vox-pops and the comments of the correspondent on people's opinions:

Film (voice over of the correspondent): "While the businessmen and the industrialists are worried the people in the street do not care about (the Customs

Union). The man on the street thinks that [the Customs Union] is a step to enter to the EU and to be European... In the mean time there are people who do not know what the EU is. But, because the EC starts with 'European' it sounds appealing to the people....*In spite of everything, the citizens are in favour of joining the EU.*"

(Star, 16.12.1994)

Following this item we hear the views and the reactions of the politicians, particularly from the opposition parties:

Newscaster: The negative developments in the relations with Europe do not seem to have created any anxiety among some political circles in Ankara.

Correspondent (in Ankara): The politicians I talked to share the view that the EP's unfavourable decision on Turkey is not so important.

On the other hand, both TGRT and TRT's news about the Customs Union and the human rights followed more official and formal rhetoric. Unlike other private channels, the conservative channel TGRT displayed a lack of concern with the internal and external factors threatening the Customs Union. Instead, it referred the speech of the Nationalist Movement Party's leader, which has always been critical of the Europe's interfering Turkey's internal matters:

Newscaster: "The leader of the NMP (Nationalist Movement Party) Türkeş said that Europe and the USA stand as the protector of the ex-DeP MPs. He also said that the foreigners are interfering in Turkey's home affairs to pay their debts to the Ex-DeP MPs and the PKK."

Subtitle (on the film): "Europe protects the DeP".

(TGRT 15.12.1994)

The formal meetings and diplomatic negotiations between the Turkish prime minister and the EU constituted long items on TRT's news programmes. TRT's reporting of the DeP trial as one of the main reasons behind the EU's reluctance to accept Turkey's entry to the Customs Union was largely based on the official statements of the government, members of the Parliament and bureaucrats. For example, in one of the long news stories about Customs Union TRT presented extracts from a speech by the Prime Minister, which was delivered in a reception for the European countries' ambassadors in Ankara. At no point we heard the comments or the evaluations of the TRT journalist. The

structure of whole news item was formed by indirect and direct quotations from political personalities:

Film (voice over): "Prime Minister, Çiller mentioned the human rights issue and stated that she is aware of the [EU's] concern as a result of the prison terms the DeP MPs received from the State Security Court. 'These 8 [DeP] MPs were sentenced not because of their thoughts, but of their connections with the separatist terrorist organization. The courts are independent and impartial. If we [the government] did have any influence on the courts we could have at least asked SSC to postpone the decision,' she said."

(TRT 14.12.1994)

In some news stories TRT used a passive structure while presenting the statements of the officials. The following introduction, for example summarised the full statement of the Foreign Minister:

Newscaster: "It was stated that the prejudiced reactions of the foreign circles towards the DeP MPs' trial cannot be accepted by Turkey."

(TRT 15.12.1994)

As far as the critical views on the Customs Union are concerned, television news provided a limited scope. The views that featured on the news were those of the opposition parties' MPs who were critical of the government's policy on Europe and also on the Customs Union. However, the representation of alternative explanations seemed to reflect the ideological division between the channels. For example the conservative channel TGRT gave extensive time to the views of the leader of NMP, Türkeş, on the EP's criticisms concerning Turkey's human rights record and the DeP trial. Moreover, on the same day we also heard on TGRT the reactions of Bülent Ecevit, the leader of Democratic Leftist Party (DLP) and the deputy leader of MP towards the government's policy on the issue. Their speeches were presented in full.

On the other hand, Show TV and Star framed Ecevit's speech by excluding his explanation on the negative consequences of the Customs Union. While quoting their reports preferred to use phrases such as 'he claimed' or 'he defended' instead of 'he said' or

'he stated'. Star also reported the press conferences of the Welfare Party, the Motherland Party and also the ruling party, the True Path Party on the Customs Union and the EU. There was only one item on ATV concerning the alternative perspectives. But this report did not tell the viewers the reasons why some political parties oppose the Customs Union and described them as *"the opposing minority"*.

5.3.3. Demonstrations of Civil Servants

The atmosphere of industrial life in Turkey changed dramatically after the third military coup in 1980 which deepened the antagonism towards trade unionism. In the aftermath of the coup some trade unions were closed down and the right to strike was restricted. As the grip of the military regime loosened the labour unions began to reassert themselves to win back the rights they had lost after September 1980. The workers and the trade unions who regained some of their former confidence demanded the restoration of democracy as well as higher wages and better working conditions. On the other hand, as stated in the 1982 Constitution, civil servants continued to be denied their syndical rights.²⁷ Since the 1980s the constantly falling wages and living standards created disquiet among civil servants. The figures issued by Petroleum Workers' Union (Petrol-Is) suggested that the wages of civil servants fell by 37% in real terms in 1994, the biggest drop since the Second World War. The fall in the workers wages in the private sector and in state industries were %27 and 34% respectively. In 1994 civil servants were offered pay rises averaging 22.5% through the first seven months, although the consumer prices index had risen by 35.5% during the same period. Hence, their real wages continued to fall, adding to the serious decline in 1994. Under these circumstances civil servants started to form their trade unions and organised meetings, demonstrations and one-day industrial actions. They protested against the low pay rises and demanded more social rights. Some of these demonstrations met heavy-handed police barricade, ending in

²⁷. In June 1995, with the amendments in some articles of the constitution trade unions were allowed to engage in political activities and civil servants were given the right to join trade unions.

violence and the arrest of civil servants and trade union representatives. Thus, reporting the demonstrations of the civil servants has become one of the challenging jobs for journalists.

This analysis deals with the demonstrations of the civil servants which were among the controversial news stories during the sample period. The news coverage of these events showed differences between the channels with regard to the amount of time, the number of items and the style of presentation. Before moving into the analysis of the main meeting which was on 17 December 1994, Saturday I will start looking at how television channels portrayed other meetings, and the press conferences of the Public Servants Union during the weekdays, which provided background information prior to the 17 December rally.

5.3.3.1. Background News: Coverage of the Weekday Demonstrations

These reports appeared only on Kanal D, Show TV and ATV. TGRT, TRT, and Star did not pay any attention to these small scale demonstrations and to the statements of the trade unions representatives. However, TGRT, prior to the Saturday demonstration, has some items about the reactions of the two opposition parties: the centre-right Motherland Party and the nationalist-conservative Nationalist Movement Party to the pay rises suggested by the government for the public servants. TRT, too, reported the press conferences of opposition parties on these issues. The only channel which excluded these events and background information for the coming demonstrations was Star.

Both in terms of the number of stories and the time, Kanal D devoted more coverage to the meetings and the press conferences of the civil servants unions than other channels did. In one of these items Kanal D attempted to find the reasons behind the public servants' decision to organise demonstrations:

Newscaster: "And, the public servants are taking action again. On 17 December in Ankara, hundreds of thousands of public servants are getting prepared to protest against the government because of the low pay rises. *Why are the civil servants always on the streets?* Even the IMF, which, until yesterday was in favour of low

pay rises felt pity for the civil servants and demanded the government to increase the salaries. But the government says that it does not have the money."

(Kanal D, 12.12.1994)

The film report which follows this introduction repeats what has been said by the newscaster. While we are told the percentage of the pay rises suggested by the government we see library film from the violent meeting of the previous year. These pictures are repeated in other news reports as well. Similar verbal and visual devices are used to report the meeting on 14 December. The report indicated the existence of ideological divisions among the civil servants' unions which had its roots in the polarisation of trade unions as extreme left and right wing in the politically unstable atmosphere of the 1970s which came to an abrupt end by the military takeover in 1980. However, the report did not state which political groups or trade unions hold these meetings, and how these political differences are reflected on their demands and actions:

Newscaster: "The government is going through stressful days because of the demonstrations of the civil servants next week. But the public servants are more stressed. *Because, before they gained their right to have a legal union they are divided as leftist and rightist groups. Therefore, next week's demonstrations will take place separately.* The first rehearsal of these protests took place today."

Film (voice over): "The date was 13 January 1994. The civil servants, who were protesting their low salaries in Sakarya Square met the beating by the police truncheons. It has been almost a year since then. The demands of the civil servants, who gathered in Sakarya Square today to seek their rights were the same.

(Kanal D, 14.12.1994)

Then the report returns to 14 December and shows us what happened in the meeting. We see the civil servants holding placards and shouting slogans like *"the workers hand in hand into strikes"*. A civil servant, who speaks to the crowd says *"we will halt the life in Turkey on 20 December"*. And the film shows the public servants clapping their hands to support him and shouting *"we are right and we will win"*. In the meantime the film cuts to the police searching people's coats and the bags while the voice-over says *"The security forces did not repeat the last year's events and the meeting has finished without trouble"*.

In the same way ATV focuses on the negative aspect of the meetings and emphasizes the conflict between the police and the public servants. However, there is a

different angle in ATV's report which reminds the audience of the role of journalism in such events:

Newscaster: "Today the civil servants went into action. But this time the previous events were not experienced. The civil servants came to Sakarya Street, protested against the government and left. *As we can see, on these kind of events the presence of the television cameras proved to be useful.*"

The Subtitle: "See, it can be done without beating."

Film (voice over): "It has been almost one year since the troublesome protests of the civil servants. However, the public servants did not give up protesting in the Sakarya Square where they had been harassed. The only thing that the passing time brought to the civil servants was consciousness, and to the police was foresight. The police took very tight security precautions in the square. Everybody who were in the square were searched. But, [the police] did not forget to bring their dogs. Yes, there was another meeting without permission but there was not any problem. The police did not interfere and the civil servants finished their protests without causing any trouble. The public servants insist on having their syndical rights. For this reason, they do even risk to be beaten or protest without permission."

(ATV, 14.12.1994)

On 15 December Kanal D had two items on the wave of civil servants' demonstrations. The first one tells the audience what will happen when the civil servants will go on one-day action on 20 December. The opening part utilises two striking quotes from the public servants:

Newscaster: "One million civil servants are waiting for next Tuesday to come. From teachers to nurses, from prison-wardens to municipal-police, all civil servants claim that they have been subject to an 'economic genocide'. The civil servants are going to stop life with the slogan of 'that's enough'."

Film (voice over): "The civil servants who work in schools, hospitals, prisons, trains, tax offices, post offices, the state companies and the banks will not go to work on 20 December. The trains will stop, the taxes will not be collected, hospitals, apart from the emergency services will not work....In short, the civil servants will stop life in Turkey to get their right for collective bargaining and union."

The second part of this report includes the press conference of the Public Servants Union and gives an extract from the speech of the Union spokesman with his own voice:

"When we shut up our employer attacked us, when we stopped our employer came on us. Today we have nothing to loose. We had to carry the burden of the inflation. These life conditions destroyed us. It was us who paid the taxes and had to be patient. It was us who sacrificed."

Then the report continues: *"While the rate of inflation is 140% the civil servants were infuriated by the government's suggestion of 17.5 % pay rise"* Then, there is a brief interview with a civil servant: *"The only explanation to this is that this is an economic and a democratic genocide. When one does not have a bread to eat there will not be any democratic rights for him/her. So, this is called economic and democratic terror."*

The second story on Kanal D on the same day was about the demands of the airport personnel for high pay rises. When a representative from the United Transportation Union says that *"we want our minimum wage to be around 1000 US dollars"* the correspondent asks with a bewildered tone: *"Mr. Cengiz, do you think that one can ever demand from the state a salary in US dollars?"*.

Show TV's first item on the civil servants' demonstrations appeared on 15 December. However, compared to Kanal D's and ATV's report Show TV's did not mention the protest in Sakarya Square. Instead its story focused on what was said by the representatives of the civil servants unions and also mentioned the preparations for the 17 December meeting.

5.3.3.2. The Demonstration on 17 December 1994

One of the striking findings of the analysis was that the number of the civil servants in the demonstration displayed variations particularly among the private channels. The number of the participants on the meeting square was reported to be 7000, 20,000, 30,000, and 50,000 on Star, Kanal D, Show TV and ATV respectively. On the other hand, TGRT, instead of giving an exact figure reported that "thousands" of civil servants were in the meeting. TRT, however, excluded any numerical indication about the demonstration.

In relation to the content of the news reports the determination of the civil servants to join the meeting despite the bad weather conditions in Ankara emerged as one of the main themes. Another repeated theme was 'the civil servants versus the government'. However, the introductions to the event showed stylistic discrepancies between different channels:

Newscaster: "While Ankara had a quite day in terms of domestic politics the streets were very lively. The civil servants marched, the health personnel were at the doors of the parliament."

(Star, 17.12.1994)

Newscaster: Today, Ankara had another exciting day. 20.000 civil servants, who came from four corners of Turkey protested against the government's attitude towards them. They showed the red card to the government.

(Kanal D, 17.12.1994)

Newscaster: "The cold weather in Ankara has become warmer by the slogans of 50.000 civil servants."

(ATV, 17.12.1994)

TGRT avoided any literary description, but like other private channels it emphasized the opposition of the public servants against the government.

Newscaster: In the march which is organised by the Confederation of Public Servants' Unions thousands of civil servants protested against the government.

(TGRT, 17.12.1994)

On the other hand, TRT's introduction for the same news item brought up the reasons for the demonstrations.

Newscaster: The public servants who have come from various places in Turkey were in a meeting in Ankara to protest the insufficient increases in their salaries and the delays in their syndical rights.

(TRT, 17.12.1994)

A further point which can be made about the coverage of this event is the description of the meeting square which was largely depended on the personal accounts and direct observations of the correspondents. These were reinforced by the news film footage showing the meeting square, civil servants and the security forces. What was missing was any careful consideration or analysis of the political and economic context of

the demonstrations. Instead, attention concentrated on the likely form of the events, the tension between the police and the civil servants and on how much violence could be expected. Thus the main march of the day itself was emptied of its political and economic content and defined as a performance. The bizarre, theatrical and spectacular scenes from the meeting came to form the verbal and visual discourse of the reports.

Star's report seemed to be dominated by the usual themes. First we hear from the correspondent in Ankara studio that *"besides the problems abroad the domestic pressures are intensifying on the government"*. Then the news film focuses on the police who cordoned the meeting area and the civil servants. The pictures of police walking among the civil servants and searching the protesters, the police dogs and tanks reappear while the reporter explains what we see. He also mentions that *"the cold weather of the capital city could not stop the civil servants protesting against the government."* Then in the protesters' voice we hear a rhymed slogan which means: *"The bewildered government is exhausting our patience"*. The correspondent describes the meeting as *"colourful"* and tells of spectacular things such as the 'inflation monster puppet' and 'pipes and drums'. In the meantime the film shows us the civil servants when we hear their slogans protesting against the government.

Similarly Show TV focuses on the two main players of the performance; the police and the civil servants. It utilises familiar adjectives to describe the meeting: *"without trouble but very colourful"*. The film report refers to the police and civil servants: *"The civil servants left the square when their demand to march to the parliament was refused by the police. The calmness of the police too prevented chaos. The civil servants just walked today but with a threat that they would go on a one day strike on Tuesday."* The voice-over also mentions the weather conditions and comments that *"the meeting square was very colourful."* Although the report on Show TV is rather brief it gives access to Ali Isiklar, the director general of the Confederation of Public Servants Unions. In his speech at the meeting Isiklar asks the civil servants *"if our salaries do not increase and our law [public servants' union law] is not accepted by*

January, shall we make life difficult for this cruel government?" Then the protesters reply: "Yes, we shall".

ATV's item focuses on the actions of the public servants in such a fashion that the event becomes a dramatic story. Note that the reporter uses emotional nationalistic elements to describe the meeting:

Film (voice over): "With the slogans of 'government should resign' the civil servants show the red card to the government. The 50.000 civil servants who are fed up with their worsening living conditions cared about neither the winter nor the snow. From Kars to Ardahan, from Agri to Sivas more than a thousand coaches from many cities and towns brought the public servants to Tandogan Square in Ankara."

Correspondent (on the location): "The situation has become unbearable! We have nothing to loose! Yes, the civil servants are shouting like this. And they are saying that they are not the government's servants but the state's. Because they wanted to show that they are not against the unity of the state they marched with the flags. *There has never been so many Turkish flags in a meeting.* The civil servants are saying that they have become destitute. So, they warn the government. Do not play with us, otherwise you will suffer! We are the owner of this inn you are merely the passing travellers! Will the civil servants who have threatened the government like this be able to get their rights?

(ATV, 17.12.1994)

This last question is directed to the civil servants in the square who reply as *"No, we do not believe, we will."* Then the correspondent continues her report: *"For the civil servants there is no solution but to march and to protest with or without hope."* Then the film shows us the civil servants while they are burning their salary slips and complaining about their salaries. *"The civil servants who can afford to smoke only Birinci [the cheapest cigarette brand] send the last packs in their pockets to the deputy prime minister, Murat Karayalcin".* The correspondent finishes her report with an emotional sentence: *"The civil servants are carrying a coffin as if they want to mean that 'we are already dead but we do not have anyone who will cry for us'."*

On Kanal D the Saturday meeting was covered by two separate stories. Like ATV Kanal D employed loaded and emotive phrases to report the meeting. The film footage showed the correspondent holding a red card which symbolised the civil servants' notice

to the government. Like his colleague in ATV he used sentimental and poetic sentences to describe the dramatic situation of the civil servants:

Correspondent (on the film): "They came from everywhere in Turkey. They get salaries ranging between 3 million and 6 million [Turkish Liras]. And, they want to live like a human being and they want to be paid the right money in return for their work.

A civil servant shows his salary slip to the reporter while he says *"See, this is the amount I get. I feed four people with this money. Who can possibly do this?"* Then the reporter's voice on the film continues with the same tone:

"They sometimes got angry. They sometimes showed their reactions. They called their governors to be reasonable. Their biggest reaction was towards the 637.000 liras pay rise. Their reactions were reflected by their placards. They did not care about the cold. They brought their empty saucepans with them. They adapted the popular songs for themselves. They found a new song for the rights they could not get. Then they walked a long way. Though their voice could not reach to Çankaya (the residency of the President and Prime Minister) it was still very loud."

In the meantime film report shows a group of people and placards: *"It is hard to live like this"*. Then the civil servants shouting *"Government, resign!"* and singing one of the popular songs.

The news coverage of the medical doctors' march on Kanal D on the same day reflected a similar emotional discourse. It was reported by the same correspondent but with a different narrative:

Newscaster: The doctors like the civil servants attempted to seek their rights in Ankara today. But the doctors, who had no expectation left from the government looked for a shelter from Atatürk and his tomb.

Subtitle on the film: "Ata is a door for hope"

Correspondent voice over: "The great Atatürk had said that 'leave me in the hands of Turkish doctors'. And, years passed since then. Now Turkish doctors are left in the hands of Atatürk. Because the only shelter for them is him. There is neither enough share of the health expenditure in the budget nor any regular and consistent health policy. Doctors could not get any result from their years' long protests and went to Atatürk with their white shirts. For doctors, like for all people who earn their life with their labour the life has become unbearable. That's why

they paid a visit to Ata. They studied for years and they had to work for day and night to get 11 million Turkish liras salary. That's why they went to Ata. They saved lives in sleepless and tiring nights. The first warm touch to a baby who opened his/her eyes to the world was made by them. And for the endless 8 hour shift they just received 350.000 TL. They demanded refuge from Ata because they do not have anybody to go."

TGRT, too presented us the scenes, the placards, the slogans from the same meeting. However, in contrast with other private channels TGRT did not have a reporter on the spot who talked to the camera. The story flowed with filmed extracts of the president of the civil servants' trade union, Ali Isiklar speaking to the demonstrators. We heard excerpts from his speech where he criticised the pay rises and threatened the government with taking further actions and organising other protests.

Like TGRT's item we do not see TRT's correspondent. This, it can be argued presents a distant and formal reporting of the event. The film report briefly shows the meeting square and then focuses on Ali Isiklar:

Film (voice over): Ali Isiklar said that like workers the civil servants should be given the right to strike and collective bargaining. He also said that the civil servants are giving their lives to work in the remotest corners of the country.

(TRT, 17.12.1994)

An important part of the film report on TRT quotes Isiklar's own words on the "*martyr civil servants*" who were killed in South East Anatolia. However, his criticism on the pay rises are reported by voice over. TRT's coverage of the event at no point mentions the themes of 'civil servants protest against the government' or 'police versus civil servants'. Compared to private channels TRT makes no reference to the civil servants' protests or slogans in the meeting. It avoids offending the government by using a more general and neutral term 'authorities' instead of 'government'. The report concludes that "*The meeting and the march has finished without any trouble.*"

5.4. Conclusion

The primary aim of this chapter was to analyse the news coverage of political and economic issues on different television channels. The quantitative content analysis

revealed that television news programmes in Turkey prioritized politics and political actors. This finding is in accordance with the conclusions of early research that news tends to reflect the power structure of society. What was important to notice here was that TRT news did not pay as much attention to business and industry as it did to politics. The close ties of the private media with business and commerce, was reflected in the higher amount of coverage that these actors received on commercial stations than they did on the public broadcaster, TRT. Moreover, the news paid little attention to the opposition parties and other pressure groups, such as trade unions. A noticeable difference between TRT and its private rivals were the huge discrepancies between the amount of time devoted to government and opposition parties on some commercial channels. While the differences between these two categories on TRT news was 13.34 %, this figure was around 33.91% on ATV and 20.51% on Star. (Table 5.4)

The textual analysis of two case studies showed that the discourse and representation of some important political and economic issues showed differences between the channels. Differences in the reporting of the same news stories occurred not only between channels with clearly differentiated political and ideological positions, but also between the mainstream channels which, ostensibly, share a similar political and economic philosophy.

During the period of this study the television news on the Customs Union between Europe and Turkey was organised, and produced substantially in accordance with the views of the dominant political and economic groups in Turkish society. The stories about the Customs Union were organized in such a way that it favoured Turkey's entry to the Customs Union. The analysis of the news also showed that the coverage of Customs Union, by and large, did not challenge government's economic policies on this matter. There were few occasions when views criticising the Customs Union were given coverage, however, these views which emphasized the risks and disadvantages of the Customs Union, appeared in a fragmented and disparate form. They were not underlined or emphasized in the way that the advantages of the Customs Union were. Thus, by embracing the benefits of the Customs Union the mainstream news channels appeared to

be supporting the government's policy to set public opinion in favour of the Turkey's economic integration with Europe. When they criticised the government that was not because of its apparent enthusiasm for the Customs Union, but because of the alleged inadequacy of diplomatic efforts to realize it as soon as possible.

However, media reporting of the Customs Union was not uniform. The liberal mainstream media seemed to put more emphasis on the human rights issue, which they presented as one of the most important obstacles in Turkey's way, to secure the Customs Union, and thus, improve its relations with Europe. On the other hand, TRT and the conservative channel TGRT gave only a small amount of coverage to human rights, and when they did, they seemed to be voicing the views of the official and conservative nationalist circles, which have tended to see the issue as a pretext by European countries to interfere with the internal affairs of the Turkish state.

Although, on the whole, trade unions received little coverage compared to the other categories of main actors, the reporting of the civil servants' demonstrations seemed to express sympathy to their demands and problems. Some of the news reports on demonstrations adopted a populist and emotive angle, by emphasising the heavy handedness of the police response to previous marches, and the misfortune of public servants under hardening economic conditions. The support for public servants can be explained by various political, economic and social factors. First, mainstream media support of the liberal free market philosophy, which demands minimum state intervention in the economy and the privatisation of State Economic Enterprises (KIT). Therefore, it can be argued that these demonstrations are not interpreted as a threat to the interests of the private sector, but of the state. Secondly, public servants, particularly of lower status, are among the sections of the Turkish society which has been most badly hit by the rising inflation rate, increasing cost of living, and decreasing wages in the last decades. Their economic conditions have worsened to such an extent that they began to be seen as underdog. This created a general sense of compassion for their plight among ordinary people, though this feeling has been overshadowed by a disgust of endemic bribery with government offices. Furthermore, due to the legal restrictions brought by the 1980

military regime, public servants were absent from the industrial relations arena until the mid 1990s. This, it can be argued, has distanced public servants from the workers' unions, which still carry the burden of the negative images of the pre-1980 as militant and extremist. Finally it should not be forgotten that public servants, however low their wages and status may be, constitute a significant section of television viewers, and as such they are customers of the products television channels advertise. Thus, by being understanding to them, mainstream private television channels have been able to avert any danger of offending public servants.

However, it must be said that although the coverage of the demonstrations were by and large sympathetic to the demands of public servants, it did not attempt to provide an understanding of their political and economic causes. Instead, the reports focused on the events themselves, by showing the bizarre and spectacular scenes of the meeting place, civil servants and the security forces. The outcome of this was to isolate demonstrations from the larger political and economic issues. Moreover, the reports also seemed to be concerned with the tension between police and the civil servants, and on the possibility of violent clashes between them. It can be argued, therefore, that although the broadcast media in Turkey today is more ideologically diverse than it was in the days of the TRT, monopoly television news does not always reflect this pluralism, and provide adequate background for important political and economic affairs.

CHAPTER 6: Reporting Foreign News

In most countries people rely mainly on their national media for information about the events happening in different parts of the world. Thus, foreign news conveyed by national media contributes greatly to the perception, and the formation, of the images of 'others' by the audience. However, media coverage of foreign news is itself shaped by various factors operating at both national and international levels.

On the national level, the socio-political, economic and cultural contexts in which the media operate, influence the nature of news reporting. Moreover, the press and broadcasting laws in different countries set the limits for news media and journalistic practices. Journalists and news organizations follow some formal guidelines in producing their news content. However, media scholars and professionals draw our attention to the fact that in addition to these formalised rules there may also be some informal ones. Though it is usually regarded as an uncontroversial area, because it concerns 'others', foreign news can sometimes be problematic for journalists, in so far as it is related to sensitive issues and taboos which touch upon, usually vaguely defined, 'national interest' or 'national security' matters. Furthermore, commercial and public broadcasting services as well as tabloid and quality newspapers have different journalistic approaches which are reflected in the selection and reporting of news. While commercial broadcasters devise their news programmes to maximize their audience ratings and advertising revenues, public broadcasters are expected to put quality before ratings. Similarly, in line with their populist and sensational style tabloid papers usually take up a shallow and sometimes openly nationalistic angle with regard to foreign news. Quality papers, on the other hand, generally provide a more in depth and professional coverage. One further factor which influences the selection and presentation of foreign news stories is the journalists' own definition of news values. It is considered that the audience would be more interested in stories which have some kind of national or cultural relevance to them.¹ Thus, which

¹. Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge, 'Structuring and Selecting News', in Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (eds) *The Manufacture of News*, London: Constable, 1973, pp. 62-72.

foreign events rather than others would be more likely to be reported depends on this presumed notion of audience interest on the part of professional journalists.

On the international level, the amount and diversity of foreign news made available to the national audience, are largely determined by the extent of the opportunities that the media have for gathering, processing and transmitting the foreign stories. Since the 1970s a substantial body of academic research has revealed that the international flow of news is controlled by a few Western transnational news agencies and global news channels, and there is an imbalance between developed northern centres and southern peripheries, with regard to both amount and nature of the coverage they receive on each other's media.² It has been argued that developing countries cannot compete against the established Western news agencies, mainly because of technological and financial barriers. The big international news agencies are able to carry news from the remotest corners of the world, where very few national news agencies and television companies can afford to employ permanent staff. The findings of numerous research in this field indicated that the high costs of news gathering abroad, and the advantages of low rate subscriptions for world news services, strengthened the acute news dependency of developing countries. Rohan Samarijawa pointed out that big transnational news agencies would reduce their prices when they operate in foreign markets in order to prevent any possible competition from the Third World.³ Despite the efforts coordinated by the UNESCO for nearly three decades, to redress the imbalance of international news flow, the situation remained unchanged, and was even reinforced with the proliferation of television channels in many developing countries in recent years. Today, four big Western international news agencies: AP, UPI, Reuters and AFP and five television news services: BBC World Service, CNN, Reuters, Visnews and WTN provide 90% of all foreign news

². See Oliver Boyd-Barrett, *The International News Agencies*, London: Constable, 1980; Hamid Mowlana, *International Flow of Information: A Global Report and Analysis*, Paris: UNESCO, 1985.

³. Samarijawa emphasizes this point by giving an example of how price discrimination in world news market operates. In 1974, for a year's supply of AP news reports, an average US daily paid US \$ 200,000; and a leading French newspaper, *Le Monde* annually paid approximately US \$ 20,000. A small newspaper in a developing country could buy the same product as little as US \$ 2,000. (Rohan Samarijawa, 'Third World Entry to News Market', *Media, Culture and Society*, 1984 /6, pp.119-136)

requirements of the world's news media.⁴ Thus, they continue to be the main source of information for not only developing countries, but also for the majority of developed nations as well.

During the course of this chapter, I will attempt to provide an overview of foreign news coverage of Turkish television channels, and discuss prevailing tendencies and problems. In order to evaluate the quantity and the quality of foreign news made available to the audience, and to find out which parts of the world Turkish television pay more attention to I will compare one weeks news coverage of six major channels. This will be followed by two case studies on the coverage of the civil wars in Chechnya and Bosnia, which were the most important foreign news items for Turkish media during this recording period. The textual analysis of these items will aim to demonstrate how different television channels approach the same stories. During the course of this chapter the interviews I have conducted with numerous journalist working for both TRT, and private channels will also be used.

6.1. Reporting from International Sources

As is the case in many developing countries one of the most visible deficiencies of Turkish media with regard to foreign news reporting is its dependency on major transnational news agencies and broadcast news services. Few studies carried out in this field deal mainly with the press. According to the results of one such research on the quantity, source and location of foreign news 83.5 % of international stories reported by Turkish newspapers and news agencies in 1991 were derived from major transnational news agencies.⁵ Similarly, another study on the foreign news coverage of TRT found that

⁴. Lewis A. Friedland, *Covering the World: International News Services*, USA: Twentieth Century Fund Inc, 1992.

⁵. Idris Adil, *Haberde Disa Bagimlilik* (News Dependency), Istanbul: Journalists' Association Publications, 1991, p. 136.

it was almost entirely dependent on the international news agencies and film services for its reporting.⁶

With the entry of commercial media to the broadcasting field, the monopoly of TRT on news was broken and the amount of foreign news on television increased. However, the dependency of Turkish media on a few Western news sources did not seem to be decreased because of the limited financial and human resources that private channels are putting in foreign news gathering. For example, a few days prior to the Gulf War, Star, the first Turkish private channel started transmitting CNN's news broadcasts for 24 hours. For Star translating the CNN broadcasts into Turkish was cheaper than gathering the news abroad even if the event was taking place in a neighbouring country. Besides CNN, the Reuters television film service has become the main source of foreign news for almost all major private channels. Moreover, through AA (Anatolian Agency, the major news agency in Turkey) they receive news from other national and international news agencies as well. However, it should be noted that AA itself gathers the majority of its foreign news from big western agencies, namely AP (Associated Press), AFP (Agence France Press), Reuters and the German news agency, DPA.⁷

Compared to private channels, TRT has more diverse sources for foreign news gathering. It has subscriptions to major domestic and foreign news agencies; mainly AA, Reuters, AFP, AP and EVN (Eurovision News)⁸ news exchanges, and also Visnews and WTN. Besides news agencies, TRT, like the BBC, has its own monitoring service which regularly listens to the radio and television broadcasts around the world. TRT also have

⁶. Dilruba Çatalbas, *Television Coverage of Foreign News: A Comparative Study of the BBC and TRT*, unpublished MA dissertation, The University of Leeds, 1991.

⁷. 73.6 % of its foreign news appeared on national dailies are provided by these agencies. (Idris Adil, op.cit.)

⁸. EVN, a major source of the TRT's daily news film requirements, started its first daily exchange in 1960 among only 8 countries. However, it has developed rapidly to supply fast and efficient news flow between its members. In 1988, 41 media organizations from Western Europe, North America, and the Middle East were active members of the EBU (European Broadcasting Union). The Union also has a number of associate members varying from single media companies to international broadcasting unions, including ABU (Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union), ASBU (Arab States Broadcasting Union), CBU (Caribbean Broadcasting Union), IRTO (International Radio and Television Organization/Intervision), OTI/SIN (Organization de la Television Iberoamericana/ Servicio Iberoamericano de Noticias-Latin America).

contracts with the correspondents of major newspapers living abroad and Turkish broadcasters working for foreign radio stations. Recently, the new Radio and Television Law No:3984 addressed one of the long lasting problems of TRT in foreign news gathering and obliged the corporation to establish its own news bureaux in major foreign centres. However, its insufficient funds still do not allow for the posting of permanent correspondents or even dispatching their reporters abroad with the exception of official tours by the senior state officials. Frustrated by this problem one TRT reporter said that:

"The TRT does not even have a foreign news bureau abroad. This is for me unbelievable. On the basis of special agreements, we receive news from the correspondents of some newspapers which have offices abroad.... If a newspaper with a circulation of 300 or 400 thousands is able to maintain permanent personnel and news bureaux at some international centres, TRT, as a public broadcaster, which is considered the largest media institution in Turkey ought to have the financial and human resources to open news bureaux abroad..."⁹

One significant reason for the reliance on international news agencies is the cost of sending reporters abroad to follow foreign stories. Journalists I have interviewed often expressed the financial and technological difficulties of news gathering abroad. None of the Turkish television channels use SNG (Satellite News Gathering) technology which has become widely used by satellite news services and big media organizations around the world to cover foreign news, especially in disaster or war areas. All major television channels send correspondents to nationally significant areas such as Bosnia or the Caucasus. However, what they are able to do is to edit the news they gathered in the location after going back to Turkey instead of reporting it live. A reporter who works for the news department of Star commented:

"Going to Bosnia with a cameraman means that we have to pay for the plane tickets, accommodation, the food etc. for at least two persons. Besides, since it is a war zone we may have to rent an armoured car and incur some other necessary

⁹. Recorded interview with a TRT correspondent working for Television News Department, 15.12.1994.

expenses. Even if we followed, shot and wrote down the news we need to send it back to Turkey via satellite. The total cost of two persons' stay in Bosnia for three or four days would be around 3000 to 4000 US dollars but sending the news to Turkey via satellite would cost between 7000 to 8000 US dollars".¹⁰

The tight financial constraints in private channels results in a situation in which foreign news is planned and produced usually by a few people who are at the same time responsible for watching, translating and editing the stories. TRT foreign news department, on the other hand, has more journalists. Moreover, in comparison with private channels, the gathering, planning, selection, controlling and production stages of foreign news in TRT is more structured and regulated. Thus, the job definitions and division of labour in TRT are better defined than they are on private channels. However, the legal structure of the TRT puts another burden on the journalists. TRT has a legal responsibility that it should be in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry. The Law No: 2954 requires that TRT's news broadcasts concerning the foreign affairs of the state should be in accordance with the principles determined by the Foreign Ministry and TRT should seek the approval of the same Ministry to name the sources and the comments about foreign affairs. In addition to these formal responsibilities of TRT the bureaucratic structure of the corporation creates some further negative pressures for the journalists. As a TRT reporter puts it:

"Compared to our Western counterparts, the possibilities we have are limited... When you are in the international arena, you have to compete with big news agencies, which are obviously in a much better position than usWe have to work within the boundaries of a state broadcaster's bureaucratic structure. I spend half of my energy by thinking of my spending. When you spend something you have to get a bill or a document to prove that you really spent that money for the work. ...we have to plan everything before going abroad. After coming back we have to face a number of unnecessary questions and implications. You cannot be really productive in this way".¹¹

¹⁰. Recorded interview with a correspondent in Star, 15.7.1994.

¹¹. Recorded interview with a TRT correspondent working for Television News Department, 15.12.1994.

The foreign news reporting in all Turkish television channels seems to be determined by the material available from major world news agencies. As a result of the dependency of the Turkish media on external sources the content of foreign news is generally reported from a second hand perspective.

6.2. Drawing the News Geography

The conclusion reached by the previous research is that regardless of whether they are public or private, national media tend to report more national news than international. Thus the more obvious geographical imbalance is caused by the heavy concentration on domestic affairs and events. In our sample the home news accounted for between 65 % to 85 % of all the news programmes. (Table 6.1). Some journalists explains the high proportion of domestic news stories with the alleged little interest of domestic audience in foreign stories. On this point a reporter from ATV claimed:

"We cannot isolate the news from the socio-cultural tendencies of the population in Turkey who are still very apathetic to the events happening outside the country".¹²

Table 6.1. Percentage of domestic and foreign news stories

	ATV	Kanal D	Star	Show TV	TGRT	TRT 1
Home News	81.62	84.75	76.44	67.15	65.54	69.83
Home News Abroad	5.19	1.40	3.61	7.46	0.32	16.75
Foreign News	13.19	13.03	18.74	21.94	32.04	10.43
Foreign News at Home	0.00	0.82	1.21	3.45	2.1	2.99
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100

¹². Recorded interview with a correspondent in ATV, 24.12.1994.

News geography of media output has always been the most important factor in the analysis of foreign news. Previous research produced evidence that certain geographical areas, such as Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe were among the least reported parts of the world by the news media unless there is a violent or a negative story.¹³ Western Europe and Northern America were, however, found to be among the regions which consistently receive the highest proportion of foreign news reporting in the same way they receive the biggest share from the global distribution of economic wealth and political power.

According to the aforementioned research on the foreign news reporting of the Turkish media, a considerably high coverage was devoted to economically and politically affluent parts of the world.¹⁴ However, the results of our one week content analysis shows that Eastern Europe and Russia have taken the leadership from Western countries. During our sample week both the TRT and private channels gave their utmost attention to the events in Bosnia, the Balkans, the Caucasus and in Muslim countries which constituted the bulk of their foreign news coverage. TRT's foreign news pays particular attention to the familiar and the culturally similar. Its ethnocentrism operates within a pre-determined geographical framework. One TRT news editor explained that:

"Turkey's neighbouring countries like Bulgaria, Russia, Georgia, and also Armenia because of its conflict with Azerbaijan; Middle East countries some of which are our neighbours; and the countries where there are Turkish and Muslim populations are considered the most important places for our news".¹⁵

During the time sample for the present study, the civil war in Bosnia and the outbreak of the conflict in Chechnya were the leading items in foreign news coverage. (Table 6.2.) Besides these stories, all Turkish channels were concerned with the Bulgarian general elections by making a special reference to the political party representing the

¹³. Anabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi, *The World of the News*, in L. John Martin and Ray Eldon Hiebert (eds) *Current Issues in International Communication*, London: Longman, 1990, pp. 8-17.

¹⁴. See Adil, *op.cit.*, and Çatalbas, *op.cit.*

¹⁵. Recorded interview with TRT's Head of Foreign News Department, 6.1.1995.

Turkish minority. On the other hand, foreign news coverage devoted to West European countries and the USA seemed to deal with the stories concerning the relationship between Turkey and the West, the war in Bosnia and the reactions of the international community to the crisis in Chechnya. The main international political actors and institutions such as the UN, EC and NATO also featured prominently in the news coverage of international politics on all channels. The meeting of the NATO Defence Ministers who discussed a possible pull-out of UN troops from Bosnia; the EU Customs Union meetings concerning Turkey's membership, the appointment of the UN's new commander in Bosnia and UNESCO's 1995 World Children Report were among the news about supranational organizations. The allegations about the Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi comprised the only news item located in a West European country. Meanwhile, North America was featured by only one story about a scientific research.

Table 6.2. Percentage of Foreign News Stories by Location

	ATV	Kanal D	Star	Show TV	TGRT	TRT 1
Supranational Organisations	3.56	10.35	11.52	9.48	24.92	21.45
Multinational	0.00	8.21	11.72	0.90	0.00	0.00
Western Europe	9.87	0.00	2.18	0.00	4.68	2.10
Eastern Europe& Russia	86.57	59.60	59.13	73.64	60.46	73.63
Middle East	0.00	6.25	2.79	0.00	3.14	0.00
North America	0.00	11.80	6.59	6.90	2.78	0.00
Latin America	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Africa	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Asia & Far East	0.00	0.00	1.90	0.00	2.09	0.00
Other	0.00	3.79	4.17	3.08	1.94	2.82

It is also surprising to see that Middle Eastern countries did not appear in our sample week with the only exception of one item on Star which was about the Israeli

soldier who was beaten by Palestinians. The Islam Conference in Casablanca, Morocco was covered within the framework of the member countries' agreement to help Bosnian Muslims. On the other hand, some areas, such as Latin America and Africa were completely missing from the news programmes of all Turkish television channels in spite of ongoing civil wars and serious socio-economic problems in these regions. In relation to the geography of foreign news reporting a reporter who worked for HBB commented that:

"We choose to report, for example, a metro accident in the USA in which 30 people were injured instead of a bus crash in Mozambique which resulted in with the death of 20 people. Our news is dominated by the events which occur especially in Europe and USA. ...Because we broadcast news from Bosnia nearly every day we have drawn the attention of the audience to there, they cannot notice what is happening in other places... We used to give news from Somalia when Turkish troops were there... It is not a very popular place anymore, though the problems and starvation did not disappear".¹⁶

Only a few items which related to Asia, the Far East and Pacific Islands were concerned with human interest stories such as the bizarre competitions in Japan and the invasion of giant red crabs on Christmas Islands.

6.3. Case Studies

As the next millennium approaches, the world is experiencing dramatic transformations. The rapid transition of Eastern European countries and the collapse of the Soviet Union have brought about new economic, political and social changes in the equilibrium of the globe. On the other hand, the emergence of new world powers namely 'United Germany', Japan, and possibly a 'United Europe' have begun to influence the future of national and regional structures. After the fall of old regimes, former socialist countries have opted for a free market economy which is considered a prerequisite for a more democratic and liberal society. However, liberalization in the world economy has met criticism due to the growing social inequalities and widening gap between rich and

¹⁶. Recorded interview with a journalist in HBB Foreign News Section, 23.12.1994.

poor nations. Today, despite the rising living standards in economically powerful countries, the vast majority of people in Third World are still suffering from poverty.

Some dead-locked disagreements and conflicts seemed to be gradually resolved in different corners of the world: Northern Ireland, the Middle East, South Africa. The so-called 'New World Order' has, however, created traumatic disorders and problems. Even the end of the Cold War did not necessarily mean the disappearance of militarism because in many parts of the world new faces of war have emerged. Although globalisation has become the one of the most popular phrases of the 1990s, nationalist, religious, ethnic and tribal movements seem to be still at work. Internal conflicts and ethnic struggles resulted in violence and massive destruction of human life and other resources. The great powers of the twentieth century, the USA and Europe are still reluctant to give up producing nuclear and conventional arms. Moreover, global concerns such as population growth, pollution, resource depletion and the appearance of new technologies continue to have a crucial impact on the future of the world.

The tensions between the old and new power structures have impinged on the structure of foreign news coverage in the mass media as well. Building on recent political and economic changes, news media have had a new agenda and exercised their role by reporting important world events in real time. The most neglected countries of the world by the foreign news coverage of international and national media in the past have come to the fore in some news programmes. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, international and local news media began to give special attention to former socialist countries which joined the trouble spots of the world.

The consequences of worldwide developments have changed Turkey's role in its region and created new discourses on Turkey's involvement in world affairs. Located just between the Christian and Muslim world; the west and the east, Turkey, since the Ottoman Empire, has leaned towards Europe rather than the Middle East. The Turkish Republic has followed the Ottoman reformers of the nineteenth century and has been inspired by the West in general and France in particular. Until the end of the cold war Turkey served as the southeastern bastion of the NATO alliance. In 1987 she reinforced

this alliance by applying to the European Union to be a full member. Recently she has signed the customs union agreement with EU to benefit from the privileged trade links with European countries. Despite the long historical, colonial and religious connections with the Middle East, Turkey gave priority to her relations with Europe and the USA. For instance, during the Gulf War the then Turkish government did not hesitate to take part in blockading Iraq with which Turkey had good economic relations. Although there was strong domestic opposition on the ground that Turkey should not take sides in the disputes between Islamic countries, the government permitted the use of joint NATO bases in southern Anatolia from where the allied war planes took off to bomb Baghdad. In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the anti-western demonstrations and Islamic movements increased in the region which, together with internal factors, accelerated the rise of religious fundamentalism in Turkey.

It was not only Islamic political parties, groups and media which started to be more reactionary and sensitive to other Muslim populations in the world. Mainstream news media, too, seemed to concentrate, particularly, on former Yugoslavia and the Caucasus where a large number of Muslim and Turkish people live. One of the main reasons for this is that there is a significant population of people with Bosnian and Caucasian descent living in Turkey. Private television stations give considerable attention to these regions as they are aware of, first, the sensitivity of the Turkish public towards the conflicts concerning the Muslim population and, second, the power of Bosnian and Caucasian lobbies in Turkey.

The following section so this chapter aims to assess how the first days of Chechnian crisis and the ongoing civil war in Bosnia were reported by different television channels, and the quality of information made available to the audience.

6.3.1. News Breaks Out in Chechnya

On 12 December 1994 news was delivered from international news agencies reporting the first fighting between Chechens and Russian troops. As with many other historical events, nobody really knew on that day that it was the beginning of a serious

crisis in the Caucasus. The first days of the crisis in Chechnya was treated as the major foreign news story on all Turkish television channels during the sample week.

6.3.1.1. Main Opinions and Perspectives on Chechnian Conflict

The Chechnian war has had its repercussions on Turkey as well. Since the early days of the conflict religious and nationalist groups have been highly sympathetic and supportive of the Chechen resistance against the Russians. However, a recent incident on 18 January 1996 showed how far these groups could go. A group of Turkish nationals of Caucasian origin hijacked a Black Sea ferry carrying mostly Russian passengers in protest at Russia's bombardment of Chechen rebels who were holding hostages in the captured Dagestan village of Pervomayskaya. The Turkish government called this action a 'criminal act' and did not want it to cause a crisis between Turkey and Russia. On the day the action ended the pro-Chechen groups met the ferry and the hijackers with chanted slogans, lit torches and Chechen flags. During the ferry crisis these groups burned the newspapers in their meetings as they were incensed at the mainstream media claiming that they did not give enough coverage to the incident. However, from the early days onwards Turkish media has given extensive coverage to the Chechen conflict as it did for other crises in the Caucasus like Azerbaijan. Recently, when the news on Chechen leader Dudayev's death as a result of an air strike broke there were demonstrations against Russia and same groups accused the Turkish government for not taking more active role in the conflict.

Working from the video-recordings and transcripts of the main news programmes, I discovered similarities between private channels in reporting and framing the crisis. Yet, variations between all channels did occur in style and presentation of the subject. The reporting of the Chechnian crisis by private channels seemed to be shaped more by national cultural influences than by the official discourse. Therefore, it illustrates an interesting example of how news media may sometimes depart from the ideology of the political establishment. The TRT's coverage of the story, on the other hand, seemed to differ from private channels' as it had to take into account the official policy of the

Foreign Ministry on the dispute and also its general news policy as a public service broadcaster. Despite the expressed concern over the possible bloodshed in Chechnya, the Turkish governments' response to the Russian military intervention in the region was to describe it as a 'matter of Russia's integrity'. This policy was in line with the explanation by the western governments, including the USA and Britain that the Chechen rebellion was an 'internal affair of Russia'.

Conservative nationalist and Islamist groups, however, argued that Turkey should condemn the Russian 'invasion' and give its full support to Chechens with whom Turkey has historical and cultural ties. They advocated that Turkey should play a more active role in international politics and abandon the blind following of Western countries' policies. The news reports of private television channels on the Chechen crisis tended to reflect those views which maximized the Russian threat in the Caucasus. When we look at the foreign news editorials of major newspapers similar perspectives appeared. For instance, Cengiz Çandar, a journalist-columnist who writes for *Sabah* newspaper, which owns ATV, drew attention to the historical and cultural connections between Turkey and Caucasus and the geopolitical importance of the region for Turkey. He related Russia's military intervention in Chechnya to her desire to control oil and gas pipelines in southern Caucasus. Arguing that the region has strategic, political and economic importance to Turkey Çandar suggested:

"Seeing that Chechen struggle might create new strategic opportunities for Turkey, we should support, help and protect Chechnya."¹⁷

A similar, but stronger view on the 'Russian invasion', and on the Chechens was found in the *Türkiye* newspaper's columns by M. Necati Özfatura. Advocating conservative Islamic perspectives, Özfatura saw the problem as Russia's "new massacre project in Caucasus".¹⁸ He rejected the western interpretation of the conflict, and blamed

¹⁷. Cengiz Çandar, 'Çeçen Direnisi Türkiye'ye Stratejik Hediye' (Chechen Struggle, a Strategic Gift for Turkey), *Sabah*, 15.12.1994, p.16.

¹⁸. M. Necati Özfatura, 'Kafkasya'da Üçüncü Soykırım Projesi' (The Third Massacre Project in Caucasus), *Türkiye*, 18.12.1994, p. 5.

UN, NATO, and even the Islamic countries' governments whose policies, he claimed, served Western imperialist powers. In one of his articles, Özfatura gave a bank account number for people who want to support Chechnya and finished his comments with an emotional paragraph:

"Chechens are brave, combatant, honest, religious, and in love with Islam. They'd rather die but not become slaves. God bless Chechens."¹⁹

Cumhuriyet, the major left-wing newspaper, on the other hand, seemed to adopt a more cautious account of the Chechen crisis which resembled the official discourse. Ergun Balci, who writes for *Cumhuriyet*'s foreign news section expressed his concern about the outbreak of war in Chechnya. He was in favour of the view that the only role Turkey should play in the conflict was to contribute to a peaceful solution between the two sides:

"Unlike Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, Chechnya is not an independent republic but part of the Russian Federation. This is a matter of Russia's national integrity. If Turkey supports Chechnya against Russia, while she is defending the unity of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iraq, it would be a contradiction."²⁰

6.3.1.2. Introducing and Commenting on the Crisis

As Teun van Dijk points out, headlines are important elements in analysing the news.²¹ They attract the attention and give the main theme, but more than that they form macrostructures which serve as crucial strategic cues in controlling the local understanding of the subsequent text. With the exception of the TRT, all television stations under investigation here used a loud and dramatic tone in their headlines. While

¹⁹. M. Necati Özfatura, 'Rusya'nın Çeçenistan'ı Isgali ve Gerçekler' (Russia's Invasion of Chechnya and the Truths), *Türkiye*, 13.12.1994, p. 5.

²⁰. Ergun Balci, 'Çeçenya Krizi ve Türkiye' (Chechnian Crisis and Turkey), *Cumhuriyet*, 15.12.1994, p. 9.

²¹. Teun van Dijk, *News As Discourse*, London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 1988.

The TRT preferred more serious and neutral statements the private channels employed an emotional and sensational style :

"First fighting started between Chechens and Russians." (TRT , 12.12.1994)

"Russia is increasing the pressure on Chechnya." (TRT 1, 17.12.1994)

"Chechnya is a blood bath." (Star, 15.12.1994)

"Russians attacked. Blood is pouring in Chechnya." (Star, 18.12.1994)

"Chechnya is resisting Russians." (TGRT, 13.12.1994)

"Dudayev's call for jihad." (TGRT, 15.12.1994)

"Russians are tightening. Chechens are hitting. Hot winter in Caucasus."
(ATV, 14.12.1994)

"Russia is counting down for invading Chechnya." (ATV, 17.12.1994)

"Russia bombed Chechnya. Chechens are determined." (Show TV, 12.12.1994)

"Chechens are ready for guerrilla war." (Show TV, 14.12.1994)

"Chechens are resisting." (Kanal D, 13.12.1994)

As it appeared in the headlines, on private channels the recurring terms were the *"invasion"* of Russia and the *"resistance"* of Chechens. News on private television channels tended to reproduce stereotypical images of Russia. In their news coverage private television channels often mentioned the threat that *"Russia is going to turn the Caucasus into a blood bath."* The negative and positive images were established by emphasizing the willingness of the Russian Federation to advance its interests through violence and intimidation, and the courage of the Chechen people against this superpower. Most private channels expressed the fear that Chechnya is going to be another Afghanistan and an example of Russia's expansionist policies.

Furthermore almost all private channels used poetic, loaded and emotive rhetoric in reporting the crisis. For example, TGRT's news account on 13 December started by presenting the main reason behind the conflict: *"the target is to make Russia a superpower in Caucasus, if not in the world."* The same news item continued to give a background of Russia's military involvements in former socialist countries and Soviet states. The Chechen crisis was shown as a natural consequence of the events in the past:

Film (voice over) : "In fact, we have seen this film before. The leading actor is Russia or, with its previous name, the Soviet Union, but only the time and places

are different. Just after the second world war [Russia] was in Europe, then at the beginning of 1980s, in Afghanistan. In the 1980s and the 1990s, this film was shot again in Caucasus. Invader Russia ignored the democracy and human rights for the sake of her own interests and established her puppet governments in these countries and hid behind the democracy mask. Now, here is the last episode of the play, Chechnya. Yes, Chechnya is invaded. Chechen people are in pain, and their country is suffering. But, Chechnya is not the only country oppressed by Russian boots. Russian soldiers are in Georgia....Another country suffering from Russian soldiers is Moldova...The situation is the same in Tajikistan...You see the film Russians are shooting in Caucasus. We do not know where this scenario is going to take us but what is certain is that Chechnya will not be the final sequence."

(TGRT, 13.12.1994)

Background information of many news stories produced positive images of Chechens while portraying Russia as an aggressive state :

Film (voice over) : "Chechnya is a small country but its name is big. Chechens, like Ingushes are one of the most warrior nations of Caucasus. The aim of Russia's latest assault is to intimidate other nations under her control by crushing Chechen forces."

(Kanal D, 12.12.1994)

The image of Chechens as fearless, brave and resistant Caucasian people was also reinforced by presenting their Muslim identity and their devotion to the Islamic rituals:

Film (voice over): " 1,200,000 people living in Chechnya. Only 200,000 of them are Russians, the rest are Muslims. Muslims, who are the majority are sometimes praying even on the streets. Muslims are arranging ceremonies for their relatives who were killed during the Stalin regime."

(Show TV, 13.12.1994)

Film (voice over): "Chechen people are coming together in Grozny to pray and they are showing that they are not afraid of Russian tanks."

(TGRT, 17.12.1994)

Some private channels such as TGRT seemed to prioritise the aspects of the stories which are concerned with the Islamic identity and its connotations. For instance, although the talk of Chechen leader Dudayev on national television to urge his people to

resist Russian soldiers was mentioned only at the end of TGRT's news item on 15 December, both the headline of the story and the subtitle juxtaposed on the film report were interpreted and framed according to this particular information:

Headline and Subtitle: " Call for Jihad from Dudayev"

Film (voice over) : "Dudayev said 'Russians are trying to physically destroy the whole Chechen nation. With God's name, I am inviting all my people to fight against and defeat Russian army'."

(TGRT, 15.12.1994)

6.3.1.3. Main Events and the Credibility of Information

Almost all channels received their information from external sources. Although the reports and the film footage they used came from same news agencies news stories on different channels showed differences in terms of style and of information. The TRT was the only channel which always mentioned the name of its news sources and excluded any commentary statement in its coverage. Its coverage presented plain facts and information received from western and Russian news sources:

Newscaster: "First fighting between Chechens and Russian soldiers, who entered Chechnya. [Russian troops] are being billeted around Grozny..."

Film (voice over): "According to the *Reuters'* reporters, the first clash started after Chechens opened rocket fire on Russian soldiers, who were advancing to 20 km west of Grozny. Russians carried out an air strike with helicopters and two war planes on Chechen positions....*Russian ItarTass* news agency reported that *11 Russian soldiers*, who were trying to enter Chechnya over Dagestan were *captured*. The same news agency says at least *30 Russian tanks* were set on *fire*..."

(TRT, 12.12.1994)

On the other hand, private channels' news seemed to reflect opinionated statements in their reporting. Moreover, they sometimes exaggerated and distorted the information related to the main events, the circumstances and the losses of two sides. For example, the film report of Star's news story on 12 December gave exactly the opposite statement of what was said in the opening sentence of the same item:

Newscaster: "During a clash between Russian army and Chechen troops nearby Grozny, the attack of Russian war planes *caused loss of lives.*"

Film (voice over): "There is *no reports about the loss of lives* caused by the attack of Russian helicopters and heavy machine guns."

(Star, 12.12.1994)

One possible explanation for this self-contradictory report on Star might be that it intended to hold the attention of the audience by alarming them about the seriousness of the crisis in Chechnya. However, there are other factors which must be taken into account. As it has been pointed out earlier, the majority of foreign news items on Turkish television are translated and reproduced from the international sources. Therefore, during the stages of selecting and structuring of the relevant information the news text might sometimes be subject to personal choice and evaluations of the journalists as well as the general philosophy of the broadcasting organisation. The contradictions continued to appear in other channels' coverage as well. On 12 December TGRT's news item gave the impression that the first attack came from Russian army whereas all other channels reported that the clashes had started by a rocket attack from the Chechen side:

Newscaster: "Russians are continuing their attacks on Chechnian land."

Subtitle: "Russian invasion is continuing."

Film (voice over): "Invader Russians with war helicopters and planes attacked Chechen troops nearby Grozny. Chechen troops returned these attacks... 48 Russian soldiers, including 8 officers who were captured during the fightings are still in the hands of Chechens."

(TGRT, 12.12.1994)

One further example to the factual contradictions was provided by Show TV which reported on the first day of the crisis that Ingushetia declared war against Russia. Neither TRT nor other private channels mentioned such a development.

Newscaster: "While the Russian invasion is on its way Dudayev government has sent its committee for peace talks [with Russia]. It has been reported that Russian war planes are bombing Grozny. In the meantime, *Ingushetian Republic*, neighbouring country of Chechnya *declared war against Russia.*"

(Show TV, 12.12.1994)

The area where the contradictions in the information provided by different channels became most noticeable was concerning the figures. For instance, the number of Russian tanks destroyed by the Chechens was different on each channel changing between 4 to 40. Similarly, the number of captured Russian soldiers also showed differences from one television channel to another. Compared to figures such as 11 and 48 on TRT and TGRT, Kanal D gave the highest number:

Film (voice over): "There is no report about the loss of lives....Around 100 Russian soldiers were captured by Chechens..."

(Kanal D, 12.12.1994)

TGRT's news on 18 December left the audience with a mystery about the distance of the Nalchik, the capital city of Kabardino-Balkaria Republic in Caucasus to Chechnya:

Newscaster: "Journalists from all over the world are making a great effort to report recent developments in Chechnya to their audiences and readers. Ramazan Aydin (TGRT's correspondent) is now in Nalchik, which is only in 70 kilometres distance from the Chechen border... Yes, Ramazan we want to know the latest developments in the region."

Correspondent (on the telephone): "Nalchik, the capital city of Kabardino-Balkaria Republic is in 240 kilometres west of Chechen capital Grozny."

(TGRT, 18.12.1994)

As the clashes intensified between the Russian army and the Chechen soldiers the Russian government asked all journalists to leave Chechnya and prevented the news teams from entering the area. Turkish journalists who could not even manage to reach the Chechen land by the time the first fighting started had to wait in neighbouring republics due to this decision. Some private televisions which sent their correspondents to the region seemed annoyed by the Russians' warning. For instance, the headline of Star on 17 December was particularly noteworthy: *"Russians Strike on Press Freedom"*. After the newscaster explained how the Turkish journalists were prevented by the Russian army from going any further, the film report presented an offensive and sensational rhetoric:

"The most affected journalists from Russian censorship are Turkish journalists. Our journalists have lost their chance to reach the truth because of this censorship."

6.3.1.4. Representing the Consequences and Reactions

As mentioned before the intensifying war in Chechnya caused anti-Russian protests in Turkey. All channels gave coverage to these demonstrations. As can be seen from the examples, the discourse of some of these news items were noticeably emotional and sometimes provocative:

Newscaster: "The Turkish nation, who have always been on the side of oppressed nations for thousand years is now supporting its Chechen brothers suppressed under the boots of Russians. Thousands of citizens, who are going to meet in Abide-i Hürriyet Square tomorrow at 12 o'clock will become one heart, one fist with Chechen people fighting against the Red Army in Caucasian Mountains."

(TGRT, 17.12.1994)

Newscaster: "The heart of Chechnya, which is resisting to Russian blockade beat in Istanbul today....Tens of thousands of people condemned the Russian cruelty."

(TGRT, 18.12.1994)

Although other channels were not as emotional as TGRT about the reactions of the public to the Chechen crisis they also gave detailed coverage of the demonstrations and focused on the human interest aspect of the protests against Russia:

Newscaster: "Reactions to the Chechen crisis from Istanbul. In a meeting at Çaglayan the demonstrators burned Yeltsin's puppet."

(ATV, 18.12.1994)

Film (voice over): "Thousands of people joined the meeting called 'Freedom to Chechnya, Peace in Caucasus' to protest Russia..."

(Star, 18.12.1994)

On the other hand, the view which described the conflict as an 'internal matter' of the Russian Federation was not welcomed by some private channels. For instance, the nationalist conservative channel TGRT's headline on 12 December framed Azerbaijan

President Aliyev's opinion on the Chechen crisis as a *"historical blunder"*. The report included Aliyev's own voice saying that: *"Chechnya is not an independent state... but Azerbaijan is. There is a difference. I am not annoyed at all."* The film report commented that: *"[Aliyev] seemed to have forgotten that the Russian tanks are now crushing the Chechen who are fighting for their independence."* On another news programme TGRT expressed its disappointment with the government's official statement on the Russia's military involvement in Chechnya by using a subjective headline: *"Bitter Explanation from the Foreign Ministry"*.

The political correspondent of Kanal D gave a more detailed account while mentioning the foreign policy of the Turkish government: *"Ankara is afraid of creating a new crisis with Russia. There are already problems, like Azerbaijan and Boshporus and Bosnia...The usual policy of Turkey is in favour of the unity of Russian Federation."* However, in the opening of another report on Kanal D commented: *"The impartial policy of the Turkish government to avoid a confrontation with Russia have enraged our citizens of Caucasian origin. In a meeting, they condemned the passive approach of the government."* Similarly, ATV told the audience that *"Chechens are disappointed"* because of the *"indifference of their motherland [Turkey]"* to *"their father's land [Chechnya]"*. The public channel TRT too provided news on the policy and the concern of the Turkish government on the Chechen crisis. However, unlike private channels, TRT avoided any comment and opinion in these reports. Meanwhile, in separate news items it presented the reactions of the Nationalist Movement Party and Welfare Party as well as reporting the views of the government and other political parties.

6.3.2. News Coverage of Bosnian War

Although the sample week was probably one of the quietest weeks on the Bosnian front Turkish television channels devoted a considerable proportion of their foreign news coverage to the conflict. On some days, by placing the news stories and exclusive coverage related to the war in Bosnia they indicated not so much what actually

happened in that particular week but the continuing importance of the Muslim population in Bosnia for the Turkish national audience.

Since the beginning of the war, public opinion in Turkey has been closely concerned with the situation in Bosnia. During the 600 years' period which ended in 1878 under the treaty of Berlin, Bosnia was one of the provinces under the Ottoman rule. The mutual religious, historical and cultural influences also led an important number of Bosnian people to immigrate to Turkey after the First World War. Today they form one of the most important ethnic communities and lobbies in Turkey. As the conflict between Christians and Muslims in former Yugoslavia intensified Turkey appealed for action in the UN, CSCE, NATO, the Islamic Conference Organisation, and in bilateral contacts. In 1994 summer, 1,500 Turkish troops arrived in Zenica, in central Bosnia, to join the UN peacekeeping force. They were the first Turkish soldiers to see service in Bosnia since the end of Ottoman era in the region. The presence of the Turkish detachment was strongly supported by domestic opinion, on the grounds that Turkey should protect fellow Muslims. Continuing ethnic conflicts and the Western inaction in Bosnia increased domestic opposition to the Western orientation of Turkish foreign policy and to the secularist basis of its internal policy. The war in Bosnia triggered Islamic identity in Turkey. The Welfare Party and other Islamist groups called for Turkish troops to be sent to fight the Serbs. Secularists in the ranks of the state are divided on this issue. One side, the 'staunch phallic nationalists' were in favour of taking military action. The other side did not wish to persuade 'Europe' by getting involved in a war in its territory.²²

Turkish media paid special attention to the developments in Bosnia and reflected the shared feelings and reactions of the public opinion in Turkey. Newspapers and broadcasting channels were obviously biased in favour of Muslims, and against Serbs. However, some media organisations went beyond this. On 9 April 1994, TGRT's and Star's evening news programmes opened with a shocking news story from Bosnia that thousands of Muslims in Grozde were killed as a result of chemical attack by Serbs. They

22. Banu Helvacioğlu, '“Allahu Ekber”, We are Turks: Yearning for a Different Homecoming at the Periphery of Europe', *Third World Quarterly*, 1996, 17(3): 503-523.

also called their audiences to protest against the 'massacre' in Grozde. The next day, thousands of people, who were mainly Islamist groups gathered in Istanbul and Ankara without the permission of the police. Enraged with the latest news from Bosnia the crowd demonstrated against Serbs, and the western and Turkish policy on Bosnia and caused the harassment of some journalists. On the other hand, neither the number of casualties nor the information about the use of chemical weapons were confirmed. Following this incident, these two television channels were accused of being 'irresponsible', 'provocative' and 'creating chaos' by legal authorities, other private channels and press associations.²³ This was a striking example showing not only the sensitivity of the public opinion towards the sufferings of Muslims but also the power of commercial media to generate tensions and rivalries. It is also noteworthy that TGRT and Star, despite their ideological differences, were the only channels reporting the event in Grozde with a similar coverage. While TGRT's report was to do with its conservative religious broadcasting policy Star's coverage reflected both personal and commercial interests. The owner of Star, Cem Uzan is of Bosnian descent and on its news programmes this channel has initiated nation-wide aid campaigns for the Muslim population in Bosnia. In addition, since its first transmission Star has been notorious for its sensational and sometimes distorted news in order to increase its audience ratings.

The news stories on Bosnia during the sample week can be divided into three categories. The first includes news items on recent developments in the region and international meetings related to the war, and also exclusive reports from their own correspondents. The second group is composed of the news stories which reflected emotional and sensational content and comments on the situation in Bosnia and appeals to aid the Bosnian Muslims. The third group contains the news reports about the direct or indirect impact of the war on Turkish domestic politics.

²³. *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet*, 12. 4. 1994.

6.3.2.1. News from the Bosnian Front

The attacks on the UN forces and the blockades and hijacking of the UN convoys in the Bihac enclave by the Serbs and the continuing clashes in Velika Kladusa, a town in the northwest of Bihac, were the major newsworthy events which happened in Bosnia during the sample week. As well as presenting the information about these events private television channels tended to use subjective adjectives and descriptions of the Serbs which appeared again and again across the various news reports. Despite the similar assertions made by the newscasts on private channels the framing of the same events differed. For instance, Star framed the death of a UN soldier as a result of the Serb attack by criticising the UN conduct in the region and by mentioning souring relationships between the UN and NATO because of this event. It finished the report by a subjective sentence on Europe. However, the information on which this comment was based was not presented in the news item:

Newscaster: "The presence of UN forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina strained the relationship between NATO and the UN. NATO believes that its power has diminished because of the UN. The latest event in Bihac in which one of the [UN] Bangladeshi soldiers died from the Serb fire was the last straw."

Film (voice over): "...The incompetent conduct of Lt-Gen Michael Rose, the English commander of UN forces in Bosnia angered even the General Secretary of NATO. ...The corridors of diplomacy are active again. But *the Serbs are more daring because they get encouragement from Europe.*

(Star, 14.12.1994)

TGRT used a different context to frame the same event. The negative representation of the Serbs dominated TGRT's report. Unlike Star's news item, here the audience were given the details of the incident and the precise number of the wounded soldiers:

Newscaster: "Serbs hit the UN too. *Serbs, who have no pleasure other than shooting the Muslims now attacked the UN peacekeeping soldiers.*

Film (voice over): "Serbs, who are continuing their cruelties in Sarajevo might have been so bored that they attacked the UN soldiers today. A rocket attack fired on a UN convoy carrying Bangladeshi peace keepers nearby Velika-

Kladusa. When the soldiers attempted to extinguish the fire in their vehicle they met *a new attack by the brutal Serbs who wanted to have more amusement...*"

(TGRT, 13.12.1994)

Among all television channels, TRT was the first to report the attack on the UN soldiers while others postponed it a few days later. Compared to the private channels, TRT's framing of the attack on the UN differed with regard to the structuring of the information and the presentation of the story. TRT news neither used any emotional or subjective language nor did it refer to who was responsible for the attack on the UN soldiers:

Newscaster: "Debates on the possible pull out of the UN peacekeeping forces from Bosnia-Herzegovina are intensified due to NATO's attempt to speed up the process. In the meantime, *in Bihac 5 soldiers are wounded as a result of the fire opened on the Bangladeshi peacekeeping forces.*

Film (voice over): "...In Velika-Kladusa, a town in Bihac, a UN vehicle came under fire. 5 soldiers were wounded in the attack. The fire was opened from the west part of the town but what kind of a gun was used is still unknown, the UN said. In Sarajevo, the Serbs allowed a UN fuel convoy to enter Sarajevo airport after two days of blockade.

(TRT, 12.12.1994)

Unlike Star and TGRT, the TRT mentioned the news on the lifting of the ban on the UN convoys and the reopening of Sarajevo airport by the Serbs. Kanal D's news programme on 16 December also contained these stories. However, in its earlier news programmes Kanal D did not refer to the attack on the UN soldiers. Instead it reported a rocket attack causing casualties and also a mortar attack on a hospital which were not taken up by other channels. Kanal D preferred to begin its reports by giving a brief background to the war and, like other private channels, it employed subjective words to describe the situation in Bosnia. In reporting the new peace plan proposed by the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, Kanal D expressed an implicit opinion which was sceptical of the Serbs. :

Newscaster: "History likes giving lessons but it is obvious that humans are not doing their duties. The Cold War period used to be the most difficult period in terms of the confrontations in the world. Following this era the New World Order came and revealed the old enmities. Bosnia-Herzegovina is going through this pain for 3 years before the eyes of the world."

Film (voice over): "...In Bosnia, the bleeding wound of Balkans, the 3 years' war, which left thousands of dead people and massive destruction behind is still continuing. The UN's protected area Bihac was attacked by the Serbs. In a rocket attack 5 people lost their lives. 3 mortar shells fell down as near as 300 metres from Bihac hospital. On the other hand, the Serbs, as happened after their each big attack, are putting a new peace play on the stage. ...After their each attack on Muslims the Serbs are drawing the attention of the world to another direction by fake peace calls.

(Kanal D, 12.12.1994)

On the 17th of December the Bosnian Serbs decided to leave the Sarajevo airport closed, and continued blockading the UN convoys. Only the TRT and Kanal D reported this news but the structure and the discourse of the information they presented seemed different. There was no direct reference in TRT's news item to the report that the Serbs did not open the airport. However, it mentioned the problems related to the UN aid convoys and planes. Moreover, TRT gave the audience the mere facts received from the UN sources whereas Kanal D offered an opinionated account:

Film (voice over): " The UN forces in Sarajevo reported that a UN plane landed the airport. But, the UN authorities also said that the aid planes are not expected to land before next week. The UN peace keeping forces spokesman said that the Serbs allowed only one convoy carrying 27,000 tons of fuel but this will meet only one day's need.

(TRT, 17.12.1994)

Newscaster: "The Serbs did not keep their word again. Sarajevo airport did not open and the UN convoys were not allowed passage. The cat and rat game continued with the Serbs today."

Film (voice over): "It did not take long to see the insincerity of the Serbs. The Serbs, who said that they would open the airport which has been closed for one month did not keep their promise. Today, the Serb forces did not allow two aid planes to land... They allowed only one UN convoy carrying 27,000 tons of fuel to enter the region. But this will last only one day."

(Kanal D, 17.12.1994)

While reporting the clashes in Velika-Kladusa Star's film report on 12 December described the Bosnian Muslims who joined in Bosnian Serb forces as *"irregular*

vagabond soldiers". Then it concluded the story by mentioning continuous Serb attacks on civilians in Bihac: *"Civilian locations were fired upon with tanks and cannons from the Serb front."* The following developments in Velika-Kladusa were reported by a sensational headline: *"Extraordinary Pictures from the Serb Attacks"* and by a subtitle: *"Serbian Brutality"* on 17 December. The whole news item utilised emotional language. The newscaster began with a dramatic sentence *"We are moving to another region in blood: Bosnia"*. To emphasize the seriousness of the fighting in the town, she then went on to say that Serb attacks were *"...targeted on the civilians"* and *"...Muslims are coming face to face with death."* The film report reflected similar statements and repeated the possible Muslim casualties. In the end, Star finished its story by introducing another tragic news report from Sarajevo: *"...today one mother and her child were shot by the Serbs, the mother died, the child is wounded. Nothing has changed in Sarajevo."*

The TRT's item on the same event was almost devoid of emotional elements. The beginning of the story showed Jimmy Carter's visit to Sarajevo, thus foregrounding timely current news. Moreover, the rhetoric of the TRT in reporting the developments from Sarajevo and Velika-Kladusa avoided any dramatic evaluation: *"This morning in Sarajevo, the Serbs carried out four mortar attacks but nobody was killed or injured. ...the Bosnian and Krajina Serbs and separatist Bosnians [Muslims] entered Velika-Kladusa yesterday."* Note that in describing the Bosnian Muslim soldiers fighting for the Serbs the TRT used *"separatist"* while Star and ATV preferred *"irregular vagabond"* and *"rebel"* respectively.

The only episodic report of ATV related to the latest developments in Bosnia appeared on 18 December. Unlike other channels ATV did not provide any news about either the attacks on the UN or the visit of Jimmy Carter to Sarajevo. ATV's report resembled Star's news story. For example by framing the fall of Velika-Kladusa and the clashes in Sarajevo ATV employed similar devices used by Star. However, contrary to Star's report, which claimed that the child shot by the Serbs was wounded, ATV made it more tragic by saying that the child is dead: *"Sarajevo is under fire again. ...the Serbs killed a mother and her son with their snipers and continued their fire through the night."*

TGRT's report from Velika-Kladusa focused on the clashes and the conditions of the civilians in the town: *"...More than 4000 civilians have been living in shelters for almost two weeks."* On the day Velika-Kladusa was taken over by the Serbs TGRT's news started with a headline that *"Serbs are advancing"* and repeated the fact that *"separatist"* Muslims collaborated with the Serbs. Kanal D brought Carter's visit and the recent development in Bihac together in one news item. Referring to the Bosnian Muslim view it described the visit as a *"show"* and a *"new demonstration from the Serbs"*. It also referred to the withdrawal of Bosnian Muslims from Velika-Kladusa as bad news: *"The news from Bihac is not very cheering."* When we look at the visual content of these reports we see the same pictures almost on all television channels because the film footage they used, as mentioned in earlier, came from same news agencies.

It is also worth mentioning that Show TV was the only channel which did not include any of these events which happened in Bosnia. However, during the sample week it showed exclusive news from the Maglaj front covered by its own correspondent. ATV, similarly, preferred to offer detailed coverage from the same place instead of reporting day to day developments in the region, except one news item on Velika-Kladusa which had been mentioned earlier. It should be pointed out that these channel's news programmes have been most widely watched by the Turkish audience and there is a fierce competition going on between them. Therefore, a comparison of these reports would provide an interesting insight to understand how competition influences the structure of their reports, and at the same time would reveal the extent of the populism they employ in reporting Bosnian war. The discourse of their news was generally populist as they emphasized the shared feelings, beliefs and values on the historical, cultural and religious knowledge of the ordinary people.

The first story from Maglaj was related to the clashes in the town. Both ATV and Show TV reported this item on the same day. The way they introduced the story was very similar. ATV's headline used striking words to attract the attention of the audience while Show TV preferred a sentimental opening. Note that both claimed that they were the first television channel which gained access to the area for 33 months:

Headline: "ATV cameras in Bosnia. Unbelievable pictures from a fighting."

Newscaster: Our friend Korcan Karar has just come back from Bosnia. You [Korcan] were the first journalist who entered Maglaj front for 33 months, you have witnessed the violence and brought [us] incredible films.

Headline: "Show TV was in the front where the Bosnian Muslims and Serbs were fighting hand to hand."

Newscaster: "Another big journalism event from Show TV. For the first time a professional news camera entered the region. We will broadcast the film unedited because it has just arrived from the front."

Speaking in the studio, the correspondent of ATV began by giving the dramatic statistics of how many were killed in Maglaj : "...8300 *people became martyrs.*" The heroism of the Muslims was consolidated by giving the fact that "*Muslims are protecting 40,000 people living within 2 km. from the front.*" Show TV's correspondent too expressed the determination of the Muslims by mentioning their limited ammunition: "*Bosnians [Muslims] are carrying on fighting with an admirable spirit. They learned how to make their own guns but these are not enough. They need heavy machine guns.*" Dramatization of the story continued throughout the news items on both channels. In the end, by advertising their news items on Bosnia for the next day both channels aimed to secure the audience:

Correspondent (in the studio) : "...If the [UN] forces are withdrawn from [Bosnia] Bosnian Muslims will be completely left in the hands of the Serbs. And you can imagine what will happen next... The hospitals in the cities are full. People are in need of help. They do not have food and clothes. A tough winter is approaching and they need medicine as well. Tomorrow you will see the people in the hospital.

Newscaster: "Besides, you have a videotape on Turkish forces in Zenica."

(ATV, 12.12.1994)

Newscaster: "In the meantime, you have interviewed Serb captives. You are the first person in the world who did this interview. Tomorrow, we will present this to our audiences."

Correspondent (in the studio): "I suppose you would remember the images of Bosnian Muslims, who were forced to wear fez to be ridiculed [by the Serbs]. Despite this I did not lose my wish to interview the Serbs....They have very interesting and shocking things to say....You will see how Bosnians are treating their captives...."

Newscaster: "Don't miss these pictures, dear audiences."

(Show TV, 12.12.1994)

The second theme emerged in Show TV's extensive coverage was the plight of Serb captives. Similar rhetorical devices were used here to construct the story. As was the case for other stories, both the headline and the newscaster claimed that Show TV was the first to interview Serb captives. The report started with an emotional opening from the newscaster and an introduction of captive Serb soldiers on the video report:

Headline: "The Serb captives are speaking for the first time on world television."

Coming next: "The Serb captives are telling."

Newscaster: "While the world is only watching the Serbian massacres for years Bosnian Muslims are continuing to give humanity lesson to the world. Look how Bosnians are treating the Serbs. Vedat Yenerer [correspondent] and cameraman Akin Depcek have become the first broadcasters in the world who interviewed the Serbs."

Film (voice over): "Almost everybody would recall. A short time ago, televisions broadcast the [Muslim] soldiers who were captured by the Serbs. Recently, Muslim Bosnians were forced to wear the fez and then were made fun of by the Serbs in front of the cameras. Now, Bosnian Muslims have shown their captives to Show TV even before other world televisions. This special Serb force which pioneered the massacres surrendered after having been encircled for 15 days. Among them there are 70 years old Serbs. Their beard and hair are being shaved and they are in special prisons. They have central heating, cloth and food three times a day. The Serbs seem to be amazed by this."

Then the correspondent interviewed Serb prisoners of war. The questions he raised tended to reinforce the view that Bosnian Muslims were treating their captives well. However, while doing this the correspondent seemed to be defensive of the Bosnian Muslims and sometimes imposed his own perspective in order to get the answers he wanted:

Correspondent (on the film): "Did you think your head will be chopped off when you surrender?"

The Serb prisoner: "Yes, I guessed this, because I never thought that they will leave us alive after what we have done."

Correspondent: "How long do you think this war will carry on?"

The prisoner: "It might finish in a short time but the media is exaggerating it."

Correspondent: "I went to Sarajevo. I witnessed thousands of shells are dropping. Is it the media who drop these shells on the civilians."

The prisoner: "The politicians are dropping."

Correspondent: "As a prisoner of war what is the most interesting thing to you?"

The prisoner: "They [Muslims] treat us as if nothing has happened. I have never expected being a prisoner would be like this."

The second prisoner: "I was sure they would blow my head off. Muslim soldiers gave me first food, and then water and cigarette. One soldier brought me to the hospital by carrying me on his back for six hours."

The interview was concluded by the comments of the newscaster repeating same themes in the interview and asking the correspondent why Muslims were so merciful:

Newscaster: "We see that the mercy of Bosnian Muslims is not only in the prisoner of war camps. Wounded captives are in the hospitals and they and Muslims are being cured together. Vedat [correspondent], the manner of Bosnians is giving hope in terms of humanity. As a broadcaster and as a journalist, how would you comment on the merciful manner of the Bosnians towards the Serbs who are destroying them."

Correspondent (in the studio): "The Bosnians' mercy is inherited from their history, namely the Ottoman era. Although the Serb massacres continue it is against their [Muslims] culture and honour to torture powerless people. Let's watch another example of Bosnians' mercy."

(Show TV, 13.12.1994)

This story was followed by another news item which mentioned how Bosnian Muslims helped Serb and Croatian people and soldiers in devastated areas. On the other hand, ATV's second exclusive coverage focused on small children which made the story look tragic and we heard the personal feelings of the journalist and the comments of the newscaster in the end:

Newscaster: "ATV is continuing its reports from Bosnia. Korcan Karar [correspondent] is in a hospital today. The wounded people coming from the front are the children, who are the victims of Serbian cruelty and the silent witnesses of the ugly war."

Subtitle: "The little witnesses of the war"

Film (correspondent's voice over): "...Our first stop is the ward where wounded Bosnian soldiers are taken care of. A Serb soldier, who has a head injury is being looked after in this hospital without any discrimination. The Serb soldiers will be sent to the prison when they get well. The second ward in the hospital is for children. The scenery here is heartbreaking. Wounded babies and innocent abandoned children whose mothers are raped by the Serbs. My heart is breaking too..."

Newscaster: "Yes, the film of these children is dedicated to the people who do nothing but only watch this war."

(ATV, 14.12.1994)

The third special report of ATV on Bosnia came from Zenica where the UN Turkish troops were serving. Emotional expressions and human interest factors dominated both ATV's and Show TV's reports. However, ATV's correspondent focused on the achievement of Turkish soldiers in the area. His story concluded with a sentimental statement that seemed to go beyond journalistic discourse:

Headline: "ATV's camera brings greetings from Turkish troops in Zenica to Turkey."

Newscaster: "Our friend Korcan Karar, in the second part of his Bosnia report, is bringing warm greetings and good news from the Turkish troops in Zenica."

Subtitle: "Greetings to the country"

Film (correspondent's voice over): Turkish troops in Zenica gained the sympathy of the Bosnian and Croatian people. With their impartial efforts, one day they repair a mosque, another day a church. The works they have done will be remembered for long years... *Their services were rewarded by a UN medal. ..I saw it with my own eyes. Mehmetcik [general name for Turkish soldiers] is writing a legend there. They are in a very good mood.*"

(ATV, 13.12.1994)

On Show TV there were three stories related to the Turkish troops in Bosnia. The first one was on 14 December which concentrated on the accomplishment of the soldiers in Zenica. The correspondent told the viewers how disciplined Turkish soldiers were despite

all the difficulties they had to face and mentioned that they received the UN special medal for their services. In order to hold the attention of the audience for the next day this story concluded with questions as if the audience were going to watch the final episode of a thriller: *"Who is most annoyed by the services Turkish peace keeping forces are carrying out in the city? Who is the enemy of Turkish troops? Tomorrow, on Show TV."* On the following day there were two connected long news items. Once again these stories underlined how industrious, giving and sharing Turkish soldiers were and how they had become an example for all the other UN forces in Bosnia. Then another news item revealed the mystery over, as it was phrased in the headline: *"The Secret Enemy of Turkish Troops in Bosnia"*.

Newscaster: "There is a secret enemy of the Turkish soldiers, who have been working with their hearts and souls in Zenica. The mujahids from different countries who are annoyed by the order Turkish soldiers brought to the area are trying to do everything to disturb our soldiers. Vedat [correspondent], what is the aim of these mujahids, can you tell us?"

Correspondent (in the studio): "The purpose of the mujahids, who have connections with the Islamic fundamentalists in Turkey is to benefit from the authority vacuum in the area. But, they are furious because of the services Turkish soldiers are carrying out without discriminating people from different religions. The mujahids lost their credibility when the Muslim Turkish soldiers arrived. Zenica people, who bear the Ottoman culture have welcomed this..."

Subtitle: "The enemy on my side"

Film (correspondent's voice over): "...At the beginning of the war, approximately a group of 200 soldiers coming from different Muslim countries to fight in Bosnia were welcomed as heroes by the people of Zenica. However, when Muslims and people from other religions were fired upon while they were having a sunbathe and swimming during the summer on the river side, the people began to feel uncomfortable. But, Turkish forces helped first to the people from other religions. So, the people of Zenica respected Muslim Turkish forces...."

(Show TV, 15.12.1994)

A similar rhetoric referring to their professionalism in reporting the news from Bosnia was also apparent in Star's special item which reminded the audience that:

Newscaster: "Star became the Turkish television channel, which covered the tragedy of the Muslims in Bosnia moaning under the Serb brutality most on its screens. Turkish public opinion and our citizens who live abroad followed the tragedy in Bosnia from Star's new team's striking films and reportages on Star's screen."

Between the dramatized and loaded poetical phrases and expressions Star did not forget to mention that it was the first channel to report the important events happened in Bosnia:

Film (voice over): "...Turkish people watched the tragedy of the refugees in Gradajac, who were in need of a piece of bread first on Star...The Bosnian soldiers who lost their arms and legs because of Serb shrapnels but never gave up called out to the world through the Star's microphones...The Muslim women who were exposed to the mass rapes of the Serbs appeared on Star first. The devastated houses, mosques, bridges, and the struggle of the Muslims, who delivered help to the inner parts of the country by crossing the roads on the mountains despite all difficulties were on this screen. Star was there when the Turkish forces went to Bosnia."

(Star, 13.12.1994)

6.3.2.2. Aid Appeals for Bosnia

The emotional content of Bosnian news reached its climax in some private televisions' special news stories which were used to initiate new aid campaigns for Bosnian Muslims. The verbal and visual structure of these items were different from the conventional television news formats. The narrative of these items reflected the features of docu-dramas which most of the time blurred the boundaries between the fact and fiction, narrative and exposition, and story telling and reporting. The main objective of these special reports seemed to be to mobilize the Turkish audience to make donations to their fellow Muslims in Bosnia. The unfolding drama of the war was emphasized by using heavy melodramatic codings. Once again these items presented us the suffering of the Bosnian Muslims and the pitilessness of the Serbs. On 13 December the first news item on Star's news programme reminded us the previous aid campaign carried out by Star:

Newscaster: "For a moment, we are taking you to the end of 1992, exactly two years ago. You will recall very well the pictures you are going to watch. Yes, it was two years ago that Star's screen had blacked out."

As an expression of sorrow Star faded out the screen and the title read: *"The film you are going to see in a while is all about the truth. And, it is only a small part of the human tragedy in Bosnia-Hercegovina."* Then the film appeared in a black square visual effect which was accompanied by an emotive music. We saw terrible pictures of the people who were killed as a result of a rocket attack in Sarajevo market place in 1992: *"This film which has not been erased from our memories delivered Turkey our century's tragedy; the massacre in Bosnia-Hercegovina. And, Star had started its 'invitation to humanity' campaign calling our people to help Bosnia-Hercegovina people."* Around the eyes of a small girl in the middle of the screen appeared a black contour again. With the newscaster's sentimental voice Star expressed its appreciation to *"the children, the young, the old; the whole of Turkey and all Turks in the world; you had put your signatures under a big aid campaign..."* and assured the viewers that donations were sent to Bosnian Muslims: *"Your aid reached there [Bosnia] down to the last penny."*

Announcing a new aid campaign under the title of *"Star Special"* on the same day Star continued mentioning the tragedies of the war which once again became the cause for calling the audience to help the Bosnian Muslims. This time Star used more dramatic and affecting devices and narrative frames:

Newscaster: "But, the bleeding wound has not been recovered. The Serb brutality on our Muslim brothers did not stop. Bosnia is continuing its distinguished struggle despite this tough winter conditions. And, once more Star is fading out its screen."

What the viewer saw next was, as in the previous item, a black screen signifying the grief. The superimposed title told:

"The film you are going to watch in a while is not taken from the Second World War. These are the pictures of the humanity massacre occurring in the middle of Europe in 1994."

The black and white film was chosen to increase the impact of the red visual effect which was the visual signifier of blood. Just few seconds later the film started a sound effect of a bomb explosion followed. At the same time the big red *"Bosnia"* title suddenly appeared from the middle of the screen as if a bomb exploded in the hearth of Bosnia. The shots of guns, bullets, tanks were accompanied with their sound effects. Then a red colour video effect started coming from above the screen as if blood was dripping. Tragic scenes of dead people covered with blood were reinforced by the emotional and poetic description of the pictures: *"What is raining from the sky is bullets, the earth you are stepping is covered with blood and corpses."* As the blood effect covered the whole screen Star referred to the western countries with a resentful statement: *"The dark page of the history is still lived in the middle of Europe, who claim to be civilized and the guard of human rights."* The shots showing the funerals and crying people were accompanied with an anguish and an urge: *"Bosnia!, Oh Bosnia!. It is struggling with an honour under the Serb cruelty. We ought to help them, it is our obligation."*

The second half of this short film depicted the suffering of ordinary people. When the blood effect disappeared the frame focused on a Serb soldier pulling the trigger. As soon as the sound effect of the shooting was heard the film was cut to the shot of a small girl lying on the street. Blood created with video effect started coming out from her head. Then the title was superimposed with voice-over and dramatic music in the background: *"Nermin [the girl] was 7. She was shot dead through her temple while she was on her way to school. Do not stop! Give your hand for help!"* The frame closed up on the hands of an adult holding a child's hands. This picture and the blood effect in the background were presented with a black square on which, the telephone and bank account numbers for the aid appeal were superimposed. During the sample period, Star kept mentioning the associations, the companies and even the celebrities who donated money for its campaign and revealed the amount of money they gave. For example, only on 13 December the total duration of the items related to the aid campaign amounted to 6

minutes which meant that Star devoted 20% of its news programme to these special reports.

Similarly, the nationalist conservative channel TGRT also broadcast special reports. The lexical choice and the narrative of these stories resembled features of fiction rather than a news report. In one of these special items a subtitle superimposed on the film contained the name of the correspondent who produced, what TGRT called, the "News Report". This seemed to indicate that TGRT perceived this special report as one of its routine news reports. On 13 December this item together with another news story on Bosnia formed 20% of TGRT's news programme. Compared to Star's special stories which mainly concentrated on the suffering of the ordinary people, TGRT emphasized the inequalities between the Serbs and the Muslims in terms of ammunition:

Newscaster: "...[Bosnian] war is not fought under equal conditions. While the Serbs are receiving arms from first Russia and Greece, and also many countries in the world there is an unbearable arms embargo on Muslim Bosnians. The world forces Bosnian Muslims to fight with one arm against barbarous Serbs. In spite of this, Muslims are defending themselves to their full capacity. The Bosnians, who have given away everything they had to buy arms are in need of help."

TGRT used both verbal and visual devices to underline the contradictions between the two sides in Bosnia to create a certain ideological closure. Like Star, TGRT accused the western countries and Russia of helping the Serbs. The edited emotional scenes and voice-overs ended with a dramatic call:

Film (correspondent's voice over): "This is an independence war, an example of resistance... Bosnian Muslims have every quality one needs to have in this great war; humanity, belief, sacrifice, patriotism and determination. The only thing deficient is arms...The European countries, particularly Britain puts embargo on the people who are fighting for the independence of their country. This is inexplicable. On the other side of the front the Serbs do not have problem in finding arms... They have Russian-made tanks...The people who are being killed are of the same descent with us. They are coping not only with the massacres but also the deficiencies. It is our duty to help them. Buy the calendars to help

Bosnia...Let's altogether set a light to brighten the cold and dark night falling down on Bosnia. Bosnia needs this light."

(TGRT, 13.12.1994)

On the following day another aid announcement from TGRT reflected similar dramatic and sentimental content:

Newscaster: "Send a card to Bosnia where the brutality and cruelty have become merciless. This heartbreaking cry turned into a meaningful campaign by the cooperation between TGRT Peace Television and Bosnia-Hercegovina Ministry of Health. We invite our people and the whole Muslim world to buy the cards, called 'the proof of the brutality' to protest the UN and to help Bosnia. Here is the news on this."

A crying child on Bosnian streets, the burning minarets and mosques, the tortured Muslim soldiers set the tragic mis-en-scène which reinforced the impact of emotivity of the film report. Once again TGRT accused the international organisations and the western countries:

Film (voice over): "Bosnia-Hercegovina, the bleeding country in the middle of Europe. On this land, which is the pearl of our glorious history there is almost no day that the children are left without their mothers and fathers. The mad felonious Serbs tortured a Bosnian mujahid with a fez to get their revenge from the Ottomans. They destroyed the mosques and minarets while the Muslims were praying. But the Bosnians became more and more courageous as they resisted brutality...When it came to the defense of Bosnia the mask of the west has fallen down. The UN, NATO and CSCE have left the Bosnian Muslims to the justice of the Serbs...Bosnians swore they would fight till the last drop of their blood...In Turkey, which has been the most sensitive country to the Bosnian struggle many aid campaigns started. The most meaningful of all these is the postcard to condemn the West in preparation of the Noel madness. ..Instead of buying a New Year card get one of these charity cards..."

(TGRT, 14.12.1994)

Although other private channels did not have their own aid campaigns they sometimes mentioned the donations organized and made by the companies and other associations. For example, Show TV reported that the Turkish Petrol Company collected cigarettes to send to Bosnia. However, the rhetoric of the story did not only go beyond

journalistic conventions but also beyond rationality: *"At this moment, it is meaningless to discuss if smoking is harmful for the human health. Because these cigarettes will be sent to give morale to the Bosnian Muslim soldiers. The smoke between the lips of the soldiers who might die tomorrow will veil the cold face of the death and the war."*

6.3.2.3. Bosnian War and Turkish Politics

As mentioned earlier in the analysis, for the historical and cultural reasons the Bosnian war has been one of the most important and sensitive issues in Turkish politics recently. Particularly religious groups and political parties have been closely concerned with the state of Bosnian Muslims and used the conflict as part of their daily political rhetoric. The Welfare Party (WP) has always been strongly critical of the West's perceived double standards in dealing with Muslims. The arms embargo on Muslims and the ongoing suffering of the ordinary people gave ammunition to fundamentalist Muslims to take more action. As the main Islamic political force, the WP arranged demonstrations to protest against the western countries' policies on Bosnia and also organized aid campaigns for Bosnian Muslims. However, the mainstream media and other political parties claimed that the WP was using the Bosnian war for its political ends. The rumours that the WP transferred the money collected for Bosnia into its own bank account caused a huge political scandal in Turkey. However, the WP denied the accusations of embezzlement saying that the donations were handed over to a Bosnian commander in Tuzla who was later found out to be not a regular soldier but an 'imam', the Muslim clergy. To put an end to all the gossip, the WP made an agreement with a private television channel, HBB, to take part in a studio discussion programme. The representatives from the WP, the Bosnian commander, who allegedly received the money, Süleyman Mercümeç, who was in charge of collecting the donations and two journalists were present in the programme. Following the broadcast of this programme, the Bosnian

commander and S. Mercümeke were questioned by the authorities about the allegations of fraud.

The mainstream media formed a united front to discredit the WP which was accused of 'lying' to the public, and argued that the programme was arranged as an 'acquittal operation' for the WP. Some of the main television channels such as Show TV, Kanal D, Star and ATV gave extensive coverage to the questions raised after the programme. Show TV and Kanal D were particularly offensive towards the WP and expressed their suspicions over the reliability of HBB's programme. For example, in a film report Show TV used an accusing tone by stating that *"the money collected for Bosnia was not taken out from the WP's safe but from the people's pockets."* Show TV's correspondent also investigated through which agencies and associations Turkish people could safely send their money to Bosnia. Kanal D asked more direct questions: *"What did the WP do with the money it collected for Bosnia?"* and commented that *"The WP is in big trouble."* On the other hand, the nationalist Islamic channel TGRT excluded the news referring the issues mentioned by other channels. There was only one news item on TGRT which reported that Necmettin Erbakan, the leader of the WP, blamed the media for being so strongly biased against his party. Meanwhile, the public channel TRT seemed to sustain its formal style in reporting both the allegations and the investigations by the authorities.

However, the results of the general election in 1995 showed that accusations and criticisms directed towards the WP by the mainstream media can be rather counter-productive. The party they have ridiculed and demonised increased its votes and took the most seats in the parliament. Unfortunately, there is no research on the impact of the hostile and negative campaign the media have had on the WP's success.²⁴ One possible explanation to this could be that the credibility of the press and some of the main

²⁴. Ayşe Öncü, 'Packaging Islam: Cultural Politics on the Landscape of Turkish Commercial Television', *Public Culture*, 1995, 8:51-71.

television channels was sometimes questioned by different sections of the Turkish society, particularly by the supporters and sympathizers of the WP.

6.4. Conclusion

The main body of this chapter is devoted to the investigation of foreign news coverage on television. The analysis indicated that due to financial reasons, the Turkish news media were to a large extent reliant on international news and news film agencies. They also reflected the well known ethnocentric bias of news media around the world. During the time period of this study the majority of foreign news coverage was taken up with stories concerning the wars of Bosnia and Chechnya, two areas where Turkey has historical, cultural, and religious connections. Some areas of the world, however, such as Latin America, the Middle East and Far East were almost completely forgotten, illustrating the shortsightedness and limited view of foreign news on television.

The analysis of two major foreign events revealed that the same information was used to create diverse stories despite the fact that the news was received from the same international sources. Private channels tended to domesticate the foreign news stories, by referring to the historical, cultural, and religious ties with the Muslim population in both Chechnya and Bosnia. This was also related to the changing international and domestic political discourse of the 1990s, which has led to the religious and nationalist revivalism in Turkey. The analysis showed also that despite the ideological differences between the largest nationalist conservative channel TGRT, and the liberal private channels they all appeared to use similar devices in portraying both conflicts. The dramatic features of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, were brought to the surface by their special news reports. Throughout the conflicts the Serbs and the Russians were usually framed as villains and aggressors, while Bosnian Muslims and Chechens were described as heroes and victims. It was also interesting to see that regarding the Chechen conflict, the comments on private channels' news, were not in line with the official view of the Turkish government which defined the war as an internal matter of the Russian Federation. On the contrary, they

criticised and blamed the government for not taking any action to protect and to support the Chechens.

The coverage of the crises in Bosnia and Chechnya were in most part ideologically closed and highly emotive. In addition to the aforementioned religious, cultural, and historical connections, another reason which influenced the reporting of private channels was their concern over audience maximization. The fierce competition between major private channels for the audience ratings led them to appeal to popular feelings and beliefs, which in these cases weighed heavily in favour of Bosnian and Chechen Muslims. Another concluding remark can be made about the 'norms' and conventions of journalistic values of the different channels. As seen from the analysis, the private television channels did not only challenge the official foreign policy, but also the tenets of 'objective' journalism. Their reports contained opinions, subjective expressions, and emotions. Description of events were not value-free, and in some cases they ignored the news criteria. Moreover, sometimes there were noticeable discrepancies between different channels and even between different segments of the same story, with regard to numerical information, such as the number of casualties.

The public channel TRT, on the other hand, excluded all subjective, dramatic and the human interest elements in the foreign news items and gave serious, straightforward and factual information. This is not to say that TRT news does not have an ideological preference, and that lack of emotion and a rational approach guarantee its objectivity. In fact, it is not possible to provide *only* facts, because these are always presented in the frame of a discourse. TRT's foreign news reporting is determined in accordance with the official foreign policies of the government. Thus, it can be argued that TRT's 'rational' reporting reflected a careful appraisal of Turkey's political position vis-a vis her 'western' allies, and also her close political and economic relations with the Russian government. In the case of the Chechen crisis, the 'rationality' of TRT was embedded in the *realpolitik* of Turkish government, in which the political and economic interests seemed to be more important than historical, religious and cultural factors.

Besides the obvious reasons for political, cultural and religious biases, the differences between the TRT and its commercial rivals can, therefore, be explained by the paradox between the official ideology and popular politics and culture. The contradiction between these two does not stem from class-based arguments, but from polarization or, in other words, fragmentation of culture, opinions and interests of the people. As observed by John Fiske:

" ..popular culture is made by the people out of the products of the mass media - it is not imposed upon them by the media and by their power-bloc allegiance. The news that the people want, make and circulate among themselves may differ widely from that which the power-bloc wishes them to have."²⁵

Today, Turkish politics is highly fragmented, and the society is torn by polarisations and antagonisms. Ideological divisions have appeared not only among the political elite, but also in every sector of society, including businessmen, trade unions, educational institutions, and the mass media. In such a political atmosphere and under the influence of audience ratings private media in particular have seemed to follow a more populist and opportunist approach, which openly exploits the contradictions between the official ideology and popular politics and culture.

²⁵. John Fiske, 'Popularity and the Politics of Information', in Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks, (eds.), *Journalism and Popular Culture*, London: Sage Publications. p. 46.

CHAPTER 7: Popular News and Reality Television

One of the most significant developments concerning broadcast journalism in recent years has been the growth of 'popular', or, in other words 'tabloid' television news. Research has shown that serious and investigative forms of television journalism, have been losing ground to more popular, and less in depth news programmes.¹ Long-established formats of factual programming, such as traditional news broadcasts and current affairs magazines, journalistic talk shows and documentaries seem to be combined with, altered, or replaced by a variety of new strategies and genres, such as tabloid-style news broadcasts, vox-pop talk shows, infotainment magazines, transnational satellite television news and reality-based programmes, usually referred as reality shows.² The main impetus behind all these changes has been the increased competition between television channels for audience ratings, in the face of privatisation and commercialisation of television industries around the world since the early 1980s.

In response to these developments, some have argued that television's role as provider of socially and politically useful information for citizens in a democratic society is under serious threat.³ In liberal democratic theory mass media have always been seen as one of the central means by which citizens obtain news and information relating to national, as well as international issues and events. In addition to their role as conveyors of news and information, mass media are also expected to function as a platform on which different opinions and point of views to be circulated, discussed and challenged in the public arena. Mass media have also provided a vital link for the communication between

¹. See J. Curran and J. Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility*, Routledge, London, 1991; Colin Sparks, 'Goodbye Hildy Johnson: On the Decline of the Serious Press', in P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks (eds), *Communication and Citizenship: Journalism and the Public Sphere in the New Media Age*, London: Routledge, 1991; J. McManus, *Market-Driven Journalism*, London: Sage, 1994; P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks (eds), *Journalism and Popular Culture*, London: Sage, 1992; Elizabeth Fox (ed), *Media and Politics in Latin America*, London: Sage, 1988; Daniel C. Hallin, *We Keep America On Top of the World*, London: Routledge, 1994.

². See Peter Dahlgren, *Television and the Public Sphere*, London: Sage, 1995, and John Langer, *Tabloid Television*, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 54.

³. Jo Bardoel, 'Beyond Journalism', *European Journal of Communication*, 1996, 11(3): 283-302.

politicians and their electorate. Politicians have found opportunities to address the general public in a variety of programmes ranging from hard interviews or to party political broadcasts prior to elections. Today it has become inconceivable to think of the political process in general, and elections in particular, without the involvement of mass media. Though mass media, particularly television have also been accused of contributing to the trivialisation of the electoral process, few have denied the significance of the role media play in the healthy functioning of modern democratic societies.

In the 1990s critics have claimed that this situation is about to change. Increased competition, and market driven policies, they have argued, have given rise to a situation in which the basic tenets of broadcast journalism such as objectivity, truth, fairness, balance, neutrality, and accuracy have been compromised, or even sacrificed in the name of audience ratings. The emergence of tabloid journalism on television has been seen by the critics of news media as detrimental to its democratic credentials. It has been argued that television news has turned away its attention from the most important stories and given an increasing coverage 'irrelevant' and 'trivial' news stories. This has altered the nature of the serious news.

During the course of this chapter I will examine the emerging trends in Turkish television news and factual programming in the direction of the tabloidisation and commercialisation since the early 1990s. With this aim I will compare the coverage of television news programmes both quantitatively and qualitatively with regard to the emphasis placed on popular news, namely human interest, crime, and tragedy. Here the emergence of commercial news, the stories which are constructed around a particular brand and/or a company will also be considered as yet another dimension of the close connections of private television with the business world and commercial sectors. I will then investigate the reasons behind the apparent success of reality-based programming in Turkey. In order to provide more in-depth insights into the content and production values of these programmes I will analyse three popular reality shows. Finally I will discuss the proliferation of paparazzi shows and sports magazines as a simultaneous development adding to the tabloidisation of Turkish television.

7.1. Tabloid Journalism: An overview

Though its infiltration to television news might be a relatively new development tabloid journalism itself is not a new phenomena. It has its roots in the earlier scandal and gossip sheets, the human interest magazine, the sports press, the 'yellow' journalism of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. In the 1970s the tabloid press broke new ground, promoting sensationalism and an exaggerated style of reporting. On both sides of the Atlantic daily or weekly tabloids, for example, British daily tabloids, such as *Sun*, *News of the World*, and *Star*, and American local and weekly tabloids, namely *NewYork Daily News*, *National Enquirer*, *Globe*, and *Weekly World News* achieved high circulation figures. The main ingredients of the news content of these papers have been extraordinary events, such as the glitzy lives of movie stars and celebrities with a hint of scandal and crime stories, often linked to sex and violence.

Although it has been widely used in everyday as well as academic discourse it seems very hard to give a clear definition of tabloid journalism. This is partly because research on news media have usually tended to focus on its political content, and pay considerably less attention to its entertainment value. There has been a large volume of research on serious news stories, such as industrial disputation, unemployment, terrorism and international conflicts. However, news stories which were presumed not to fit these categories tended to receive little attention.

Today tabloid journalism implies more than the size of the newspaper and the nature of the stories in it. It has become a news idiom which describes a new understanding in journalism that

"has generally eschewed coverage of weighty political and economic issues in favour of an emphasis on the more immediate instances of deviance, conflict, and threat to or disruption of everyday life. Crime, corruption, scandal, human tragedy, and suffering-particularly associated with sex, violence and (illicit) money- continue to form the staple ingredient for tabloid news."⁴

⁴. Graham Knight, 'The Reality Effects of Tabloid Television News', in Raboy, Marc and Bruck, Peter A., (eds.), *Communication For and Against Democracy*, NewYork: Black Rose Books, 1989, pp. 111-131.

The immoral and the illegal represented with a style of exaggeration, and over-dramatisation have been the main focus of popular journalism. Emphasising the subjective rather than the objective, personalising the events, putting accent on the individuals, and their feelings and reactions have been some of the main characteristics of tabloid news.

It was during the early 1970s that tabloid television news began effectively with the 'happy talk' format of 'Eyewitness' and 'Action News' shows in the USA. Ben Bradlee, the Washington Post editor who became famous in 1972 through his paper's Watergate exposures has referred to the 'critical problem' of 'New News'. In Bradlee's opinion tabloid news contained "a cocktail of influences from Hollywood and TV-pop music, pop art, celebrity and entertainment magazines, sleazy supermarket weeklies and TV programmes, Nintendo, cable and home video".⁵ Since the emergence of the first tabloid formats in the USA, several developments contributed to the expansion of tabloid television news. First was the growing popularity of television news in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. The second development was the increasing competition for viewers and advertising revenues that occurred as a result of the intensification of the economic crisis in the 1970s. The third major development which accelerated the move towards tabloidisation of television news was the expansion of new broadcasting technologies, particularly cable services which further intensified the competition. Moreover the replacement of film with videotape as the standard medium for visual and audio recording and introduction of smaller video cameras had a number of immediate organisational effects, reducing costs and increasing the opportunities for reporting from the location.

The rise of tabloid journalism has caused tensions between journalists working for tabloid media and intellectuals of both left and right wing convictions. It was described as 'bad', 'compromised', 'irresponsible' news as opposed to 'good', 'accurate', 'responsible' television that may be unpopular but useful. 'Infotainment', 'body bag journalism', 'trash for cash', and 'chequebook journalism' were some of the labels used to

⁵. Roy Greenslade, 'Why New News is Bad News', *Media Guardian*, 26. 10.1992, p. 15.

describe tabloid news. Journalists and editors producing tabloid news were accused of operating on the principle of 'if it bleeds it leads'.⁶ Therefore, popular journalism is often considered as "a distasteful and sensational 'distortion of facts' that stands in stark contrast to traditional, official, or highbrow news."⁷ Grabe argues that this distinction between highbrow and tabloid journalism redraws social distinctions between different classes in society. In the USA Simmons market research states that working class people comprise of large portion of the tabloid television audience. Therefore, the position of tabloid news is considered to be low while traditional/highbrow news is held up as an example of high culture. While high culture is used to refer to music, art and literature, performed by the members of educated/cultured elite popular or low culture refer to the symbolic products, associated with the poor, uneducated, working and 'uncultured' classes.

Journalists who report tabloid news, on the other hand, claim that they are part of the human interest drama. They argue that they employ subjective eyewitness camera viewpoint to draw the viewer into the news stories. The arguments in favour of tabloid news and dramatic elements of news coverage have found support in academic arena as well. Graham Knight has argued that tabloid news "acts as a mirror, not in the conventional sense of a reflection of reality, but as an instrument through which the viewer is encouraged to recognise him/herself in meaningful ways."⁸ It has been argued that stories lacking excitement and emotional involvement will be ignored or only briefly remembered.⁹ Doris Graber argues that entertainment features and dramatic framing in

⁶. *ibid.*

⁷. Maria Elizabeth Grabe, 'Tabloid and Traditional Television News Magazine Crime Stories: Crime Lessons and Reaffirmation of Social Class Distinctions', *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 1996, 73 (4): 926-946.

⁸. Graham Knight, in *ibid.*, 1989, p. 123.

⁹. See John Robinson and Mark Levy, *The Main Source: Learning From Television News*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage 1986 and Sharon Lyn Sperry, 'Television News as Narrative', in Richard P. Adler (ed.) *Understanding Television*, New York : Praeger, pp. 295-312.

television news attract audiences, and help them to involve themselves in routine news stories.¹⁰

Television news, John Fiske has argued, should be evaluated less by informational criteria and more by those of popular appeal. In Fiske's opinion popular news should aim to meet the criteria of "popular taste, those of relevance and pleasurable productivity".¹¹ Relevance is a matter of content and requires both macro and micro level cultural connections between the news text and the social experience of the audience that preceded it. Productivity is, on the other hand, a matter of form. Fiske has asserted that more open texts would attract more attention. Therefore, popular news needs to meet the literary values of the mid-level culture and the criteria of social importance and social responsibility. Fiske has concluded that "TV news is already like soap opera, but it needs to extend these similarities if it is to engage its topics relevantly and importantly with the everyday lives of the people".¹²

Case studies on popular news, on the other hand, indicated that news programmes which contain tabloid elements cater to audiences with different socio-economic status. The representation of subordinate groups on 'neutral terrain', it has been argued, plays a crucial role in achieving hegemonic consent, and in maintaining the socio-economic divisions, and the interests of dominant groups.¹³ The results of Grabe's study, which compares tabloid and traditional broadcast news magazine programmes on American television showed that "tabloid news, and all of what is regarded as mass culture, is rather a benign artifactual form which not only poses very little threat to higher cultural forms, but actually reaffirms highbrow culture".¹⁴ Knight states that tabloid news

¹⁰. Doris Graber, 'The Infotainment Quotient in Routine Television News: A Director's Perspective', *Discourse and Society*, Vol: 5(4), 1994, pp. 483-508.

¹¹. John Fiske, *Reading the Popular*, London: Unwin Hyman, 1989, p.185.

¹². *ibid.* p.197.

¹³ . See John Hartley, *Understanding News*, London: Methuen, 1982, p. 59, and J. Langer, *op. cit.*, p.152-154.

¹⁴. M. Elizabeth Grabe, in *op. cit.*, p. 941.

is conservative, and it stresses corruption, self-interest, and the greed of the politically powerful, and the upper-class, while simultaneously promoting traditional religious blue-collar values.¹⁵ Hallin points out that tabloid news programming are "deeply problematic development for the culture", as it leads to "a division of the news audience into one part, mostly wealthier and better educated which 'consumes' news of perhaps of a higher quality than we have yet seen, and another far large part, poorer, less educated", which "would widen cultural barriers, and intensify the knowledge gap between these two".¹⁶ This becomes even more problematic in a developing society, where the purchasing power, and the literacy rates are relatively lower than in developed countries, and where people depend on television as their main source of information which influence their decisions over important social and political issues.

7.2. Popular News On Turkish Television

The early 1990s have been a period of substantial change in Turkish broadcasting system, involving the break-up of the traditional public service framework of state-owned channels and the rapid multiplication of private channels based on different commercial, cultural and ideological ethos. The causes of the system's evolution have been political, ideological, economic and technological, but all have pushed Turkish broadcasting towards greater variety, greater competition, and increased sensitivity to commercial criteria in programming choices. With the breakdown of monopolistic hold of TRT in 1990, private channels, with their commercial logic, have proved much more responsive to civil configurations of Turkish society in their attempts to attract heterogeneous television audiences.

These developments have had a profound impact on the nature of television news as well as other programme genres. As with other countries the increasing commercialism and the concern over the audience ratings have led to an increase in the amount of popular

¹⁵. Knight, in op. cit., p.

¹⁶. Daniel Hallin, *We Keep America On Top of the World*, London: Routledge, p.178.

news and reality show programmes. In fact the development of tabloid journalism in the Turkish news media can be traced back to the 1980s when a number of tabloid titles have shaken the circulation figures. Prior to that major mainstream newspapers like *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet* and *Sabah* used to cover crime, tragedy, commercial and human interest stories in their third and fourth pages. As the Turkish press continued to commercialise, the number of tabloids increased and popular news began to appear even on the front pages of the mainstream newspapers. A content analysis of three mainstream newspapers in Turkey indicates that 43 percent of the news reports that appeared on the first pages were tabloid and sensational stories while 44 percent devoted to political news and 18 percent contained statistical information.¹⁷ It was, however, commercial television which has made tabloid news stories accessible for large numbers of heterogeneous audiences. Recently, there has been a further increase in the amount of these type of stories. These stories, particularly the ones reporting on personal tragedies are repeated for few consequent days or week, with little or sometimes no change in the textual and visual content, but with increasing dosage of emotive content.

7.2.1. Analysis of News Programmes

In this section, first I will offer a brief overview and discussion of the quantitative analysis of the popular news items on the main evening newscasts of six major television channels including, ATV, Kanal D, Star, Show TV, TGRT and the public broadcaster TRT1 during a time period of one calendar week between 12 and 18 December 1994. Later I will go on to investigate in more detail the principal characteristics and production values of some of the major categories of popular news topics such as crime, human interest, entertainment and celebrities and tragedies and accidents. Here I will also look at some stories concerning the activities and products of commercial companies which stand rather awkwardly between news and advertising.

¹⁷. Nurdogan Rigel, *Medya Ninnileri (Media Lullabies)*, Istanbul: Sistem Yayıncılık, 1993, p.132.

Nearly one fourth (18.10 percent) of early evening news programmes on six channels, on average, was taken up with crime, tragedy, accident, and human interest news reports.¹⁸ (Table 7.1.) One of the major discrepancies which occurred between TRT and its commercial competitors was the prominence of 'popular' news stories within the overall coverage of news programmes. When we combine the figures of these three categories on all channels, the time allocated to 'popular' news accounts for about one-third of the broadcast on Star with 32.54 percent. On other private channels, the percentage of these three categories is 24.09 percent on Kanal D, 22.45 percent on Show TV, 18.36 percent on ATV and 11.08 percent on TGRT. However, the share of 'popular' news in TRT1's news programmes is considerably low with the percentage of 4.39 compared to private television channels.

Table 7.1. Percentage of Popular News Stories

	ATV	Kanal D	Star	Show TV	TGRT	TRT 1
Human Interest	13.03	17.06	19.68	12.66	8.91	1.64
Crime/Police	4.50	3.96	10.36	9.79	1.65	0.82
Tragedy/Disaster	0.83	3.07	2.50	0.00	1.24	1.93

Among the three categories of popular news human interest with 12.17 percent received the largest attention. Reports on crime, police and judiciary matters came second with 6.11 percent and tragedy and accident stories were the lowest with 1.30 percent, though these figures varied from one channel to another.

Table 7.2. Percentage of Main Actors in Popular News

	ATV	Kanal D	Star	Show TV	TGRT	TRT 1
Criminals-Police	9.57	5.84	10.37	18.03	2.25	2.00
Celebrities	13.43	9.49	9.10	12.37	2.03	0.88
Ordinary People	2.10	7.73	11.18	1.17	13.85	0.00

¹⁸ . See Appendix

When the percentage of main actors in popular news was calculated the criminals and the police had highest amount with 8.95 percent, which was followed by celebrities with 6.54 percent and ordinary people with 4.91 percent. The total percentage of these three categories in all main actors was 20.61 percent. (Table 7.2.)

7.2.2. Human Interest Stories

The news which were categorised here as human interest stories frequently contained captivating, humorous, amusing, frivolous and unusual events. News about the activities and commodities of the companies constituted a significant part in these types of news reports. These items are examined in the following sections of the chapter. The human interest stories tended to fall within the second half of the news programmes, confirming a pattern documented by the earlier research on television news.¹⁹ However, some human interest stories appeared between the serious news items. Langer suggests that this is because of the ambiguity of news values of these type of news.²⁰ Moreover, the intention of commercial channels to maintain, and to attract more audience attention by putting a lighter touch to the rest of the news programme is another important factor in this practice.

During the one-week sample taken of main news programmes of the day, Star was the only channel which presented more human interest stories than any other channels did:

- *"Hair dresser who brought live band in his shop to attract more customers"*
- *"The show of sports women who were at World Body Building Championship in Izmir"*
- *"Surprise gift from Ibrahim Tatlis (a famous arabesque music singer) to Turkish National Football Team: 100 million Turkish liras to the first goal scorer"*

¹⁹. See Jay Epstein, *News From Nowhere*, 1973; Glasgow Media Group, *Bad News*, 1976, Philip Elliott, *Making the News*, 1979; and John Langer, *Tabloid Television*, London: Routledge, 1998.

²⁰. John Langer, op. cit., p.50.

- *"Star's beauty contest"*
- *"Hülya Avsar (a famous actress and singer) is in trouble due to her alleged religious marriage"*
- *"A man who walks in the streets of Ankara to show off his catch of 2 metres long snake fish"*
- *"The invasion of crabs in Christmas Island,"*
- *"First snow of the year in Ankara"*
- *"New Year with its colourful streets and the attractive buildings and shops; Vakko (a department store) and Divan Hotel"*
- *"The Egean University's New Year Eve's turkeys"*
- *"Gift fair in Istanbul"*
- *"Women, who take karate lessons for defence"*
- *"Alpaslan Türkeş (the then leader of Turkish Nationalist Party) was among the guests invited to haircutting competition"*
- *"Films of the year"*
- *"Elle Macpherson (a famous American top-model) is in Istanbul"*
- *"Costs of New Year Eve celebrations in some well-known hotels and restaurants"*
- *"The lecture on Aids and sex in Istanbul University caused laughter among students"*

The main themes of these type of stories on ATV concerned

- *"Ankara's new friends: the seagulls"*
- *"Zeki Müren's (a famous Turkish classical music singer) concert on the phone"*
- *"The nostalgic visit of Husamettin Cindoruk (the president of the Turkish parliament) to his college"*
- *"Yasemin Yalçın (a famous woman comedian) was taken to the hospital after she fell and hit her head"*
- *"A model attitude from the casting team of Hastane (Hospital, ATV's comedy-drama) as they donate blood"*
- *"Ankara is under the snow"*
- *"Vakko's New Year reception"*
- *"Marriage ceremony of 76 year old man and 79 year old woman"*
- *"Pera Palas Hotel's 103rd anniversary"*
- *"Fashion show opens with Turkish national anthem"*
- *"Book exhibition at Pera Palas"*
- *"Elle Macpherson is in Istanbul"*

Show TV gave particular attention to the stories concerning the then prime minister, and her husband as well as similar stories reported on other private channels.

These included:

- "*Özer Çiller (a prominent businessman and husband of the then prime minister, Tansu Çiller) flew Germany to join a slimming programme*"
- "*The scenes from Robert Altman's film, in which Sophia Loren performs a striptease*",
- "*Boat Show*"
- "*Noel Trees in Turkish style*"
- "*Hülya Avsar's trouble with her religious marriage*"
- "*The spider man Mehmet Ilkay climbs the walls*"
- "*Tansu Çiller's (the then prime minister) style diplomacy: touching*"
- "*Turkish Marie Claire magazine*"
- "*Elle Macpherson is in Istanbul*"
- "*Politicians' interesting hand signs*"

Kanal D covered different human interest and celebrity stories:

- "*Sibel Can (a famous woman singer)'s visit her husband whose is doing his military service*"
- "*Ankara's dustmen in suits*"
- "*Dancing bear Rino in the USA*"
- "*The invasion of crabs in Christmas islands*"
- "*Journalist Celallettin Çetin (he works for Milliyet, newspaper which belongs to Dogan Holdings which also owns Kanal D)'s passion for news*"
- "*Loto*"
- "*Pera Palas' anniversary*"
- "*Gift fair*"
- "*1995 winter fashion*"
- "*Ferhangi Seyler's 1050th play*"
- "*The success of Turkish pop singers*"
- "*The reactions of general public towards the critics of young pop singers*"
- "*What do university students think about Turkish pop singers*"
- "*Arnold Schwanazeger's film in which he becomes pregnant*"
- "*Hair dressers are angry with Ahmet Kaya (a famous singer)*"
- "*Alpaslan Turkes was at hairdressers' competition*"
- "*The top of the pops this year*"

However, unlike other private channels, news programmes on the conservative Islamist channel TGRT gave no coverage to the personalities from either political or entertainment world:

- "The invasion of crabs"*
- "TGRTs economy programme wins the prize of Istanbul University"*
- "The screaming competition in Japan"*
- "Vakko's new year celebrations and bomb alert"*
- "The Noel trees massacre"*
- "Pottery exhibition of a housewife"*
- "An Ottoman well was found under Gelenbevi High school"*
- "The exhibition of disappearing professions"*
- "Rescue operation of a giant lobster in the USA"*

On TRT, however, there were only two human interest stories:

- "Istanbul University Economy Faculty's prizes for news media"*
- "150 million years old pine tree fossil found in Sidney"*

New Year Eve celebrations were the only story covered by all private channels. However, there were differences between the mainstream channels and TGRT with regard to the context and main theme of the event. Star, ATV, Show TV and Kanal D focused on the New Year receptions of some companies, shops and hotels, the prices of the New Year's Eve parties at some well-known hotels and restaurants, gift fairs, and street and shop decorations. TGRT, on the other hand, was critical of the approaching New Year's Eve celebrations. This was in line with TGRT's general broadcasting policy, which is based on nationalist and Islamist values and principles. TGRT's report warns the audience against the *"massacre of pine trees"* repeated before every New Year's Eve. The presenter says *"We must say 'stop' to this massacre, which is part of a foreign culture"*. The story continues:

Film (voice over): "Our forests are providing us with finite benefits and invaluable beauties.. These pine saplings swinging with the winds as if they are singing are part of our forests. How beautiful they are where they are, aren't they? Now they look like wretched children who have been taken away from their home. These young trees are cut and sold by humans, in fact and more sadly, by the state. These people want to decorate these trees. Our state is proud of serving them. It did not

hesitate to cut, and to sell these tiny saplings as little as between 300.000 and 1 million Turkish liras. Of course, if the state does, the ordinary people would do. This cunning man has pulled up these poor trees from the forest illegally, but, by chance, he was caught by the local authorities. This is just one case. If do not want our forests disappear, we should protect them when they are still in the arms of the nature". (TGRT, 15.12.1994)

A significant proportion of human interest stories covered by Turkish private channels during the time period under investigation consisted of the everyday doings, and life styles of celebrities, politicians and businessmen, the extraordinary actions, and achievements of ordinary people. A great majority of these stories, however, were concerned with 'personalities'. Recent research on human interest stories indicated that these type of stories tend to focus mainly on two social groups; elites and ordinary people.²¹ Galtung and Ruge in their well-known analysis on news values noted that "the more the event concerns elite people, the more probable that it will become a news item" for "the actions of elite people are, at least usually and in short term perspective, more consequential than the activities of others".²² The actions, remarks, situations, possessions and attributes of elite persons become "naturally newsworthy" because of their power, status, celebrity and prestige in the society.²³

On Turkish private channels too there were human interest stories about political and business elite which concentrated on their daily life activities, rather than their formal political and economic affairs. For example, the visit of Hüsammaddin Cindoruk, the then president of Turkish parliament to his high school was reported by ATV in a humorous way, showing him chatting, having lunch and making jokes with pupils. On Show TV, the news about Özer Çiller told us his activities regarding neither his role as the then prime minister's husband and nor as a prominent businessman, but about his trip to Germany to

²¹. *ibid.*, p.45-73.

²². Galtung and Ruge, pp. 56-57, revised edition, 1981

²³. Stuart Hall, 'The Determinations of News Photographs', in S. Cohen and J. Young (eds), *The Manufacture of News*, London: Constable, 1973, p. 236.

join a slimming programme. Presenting politicians with a 'human face' has long been part of news programmes in the USA, and is becoming more common on West European television.²⁴ Show TV's report focused on Tansu Çiller, the then prime minister, on her personality and the way she behaves in certain social and political contexts. The newsreader opens the story as: *"the warm attitude of Çiller towards her colleagues and other people has been noticed by the foreign media too. In the American press, they have even begun to make jokes like 'do not let Çiller get near our president'. Why? Here is the answer to this question."* Then we see the subtitle saying that *"Diplomacy by touching"*. On the film, Çiller is seen shaking the hands of various people at meetings, funerals and visits while we hear an emotive music in the background. Some shots are repeated in slow motion during the report:

Film (voice over): "She is sometimes a mother, sometimes a sister. Her behaviour is proof of her words. You can see her either embracing her teacher, or the children with a mother's affection. She never gives up hugging and touching. She knows very well that she impresses people by touching them. Her hands speaks for her. You can understand that she is sad when you see her hands are together. When her hands are clenched tightly, it means that Turkey is having a difficult time. The same hands console the sad and give them strength. Look, how she is consoling a wounded soldier by using her hands. But, when her hands are not powerful enough, she prefers to embrace people. The prime minister sometimes uses her hands to convince others. You can see her shaking hands with Kohl or Major. Particularly at diplomatic meetings, her friendly behaviour is eliciting various comments in the foreign media. An American magazine, which has noticed Çiller's pleasant weakness warned that Çiller's such behaviour could be misunderstood and wrote 'please, keep away her from President Clinton' ". (Show TV, 12, 1994)

The non-political elite, such as television personalities, theatrical performers, sporting champions, fashion designers, pop music stars receive considerable attention by the news. Langer calls them "powerless elite", and argues that they "have little in the way of conventional institutional power but still qualify as 'especially remarkable' with the

²⁴. Peter Dahlgren, *Television and the Public Sphere*, London: Sage, 1996. p. 56.

capacity to arouse a considerable 'degree of interest'.²⁵ This was also valid for Turkish television news. The religious wedding of Hülya Avsar, a famous actress was one of the important human interest stories during the sample week. This report does not only tell us about Avsar's private life, but also mentions an important social issue; the status, and the validity of religious wedding on which there has been ongoing discussions and disagreements between the secularist and the Islamist political circles. In Turkey, the religious wedding is not recognised by the Civil Code as legitimate marriage, and it is illegal. There are thousands of religiously-wedded couples, especially in rural areas. However this becomes newsworthy when a celebrity gets into trouble as a result of rumours about that she has been religiously wedded.

Previous research which focused on the representation of the celebrities indicated also that the political ideology of these stories operate at a populist level, "on behalf of the people".²⁶ Kanal D's report on a polemic concerning young Turkish pop singers proves this point. Three serial news stories on Kanal D achieve this by acclaiming the successes of young singers, by praising their private lives and by justifying their popularity on the grounds that they spread Turkish culture to other countries. The story does not offer new information, but a compilation of routine arguments and debates on Turkish pop music:

"their influence is felt not only in Turkey, but also in all Central Asian Turkic Republics, Iran, Israel, other Middle Eastern countries, Greece and Balkans. They save Turkey from cultural imperialism and make her a regional power which influences other cultures. And they are being criticised. Old pop singers are against these young talents... Young singers are not using drugs, and apparently have more stable private lives than their predecessors. What is more, they are cultured, with good manners, and as such, are setting an ideal example to the Turkish youth of today. However, they are being criticised. Is this because destructive forces within Turkish society have become louder than the more positive sector of public opinion?"

(Kanal D, 12, 1994)

²⁵. John Langer, *op.cit.*, p. 46

²⁶. Ian Connell, 'Personalities in the Popular Media', in P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks (eds), *Journalism and Popular Culture*, London: Sage, 1992, p.82.

Following this, there was a also separate item in which vox-pop interviews in favour of the young pop singers appear. Kanal D continues to reflect the reactions of the public towards the old singers next day as well. This time, we hear the university students' views on the issue. They are filmed dancing in discos to the songs of these well-known singers. All of these stories seem to be in support of the opinions for the young pop singers.

Langer points out that stories about the elite people, both the 'powerful' and 'powerless' become newsworthy, simply because 'who they are'. On the other hand, news stories which focus on ordinary people "locate individuals as 'no one particularly special', certainly having no place in the higher world, but still qualifying as especially remarkable by virtue of distinctive deeds and achievements".²⁷ For ordinary people to enter news they, and their doings have to be novel, unusual, surprising and extraordinary. This is based on one of the long-established news values suggested by Galtung and Ruge that because "what is regular and institutionalised, continuing and repetitive at regular and short intervals, does not attract so much attention.... Events have to be unexpected or rare, or preferably both to become good news".²⁸ Same news values applied in the coverage of ordinary people on Turkish news. For example, a man carrying a 2 metre long snake fish in the streets of Ankara was followed by ATV's cameras. People's reactions and opinions were presented during the course of the report. On Show TV's news story, we were told about the amazing story of the *"spider man who achieves the impossible by climbing walls"*. The report says that *"he owes this to his dream to become like the Spider Man, who was created in America during the 1960s"* while the film shows us some fragments from the cartoon and the film of 'Spider Man'. In both stories, superlatives have been used to proclaim, and to put more emphasis on the achievements of ordinary people and the remarkable qualities of these stories. Langer points out that the use of words in this way comes from the world of advertising and marketing.²⁹ The fisherman's catch is labelled as

²⁷. Langer, op. cit., p.62.

²⁸. Galtung and Ruge, op. cit., p.55

²⁹. Langer, op. cit., p.69.

'the longest snake fish ever to have been caught' and the karateist is presented as *"the first Turkish spider man in the world"*.

An interesting example of an ordinary people news story appears on Kanal D. Although the actual event is caused by personnel policies of the Ankara council, the report focuses on an amusing aspect of it rather than the serious political and economic consequences for the employees:

News Presenter: "Have you ever seen a street cleaner going about his work in a suit? We have witnessed this bizarre situation as the personnel policies of Ankara's council butt up against the bureaucratic traditions of our capital. Engineers, dressed for this profession, waiting to start work, are commanded to sweep the streets for the day to fill a vacancy."

The following news story appears to completely contradict the verbal information delivered by the news presenter and the reporter. To a background of loud country and western music we see men in suits mending the roads- surprisingly there is absolutely no evidence of their cleaning the streets - so, there is a clear contradiction between verbal and visual footage at this point. It could be argued that this is a ploy to attract audience attention by presenting information in a 'whimsical' and 'entertaining' style, with complete disregard for accuracy. However, the report contains also an element of black humour when the voice over of the reporter makes a historical comparison:

"The year is 1944. The place is Berlin. The Nazis are making the intellectuals, engineers and scientists in the country work in the most difficult jobs in order to suppress the social opposition. Sorry. The year is 1994. The place is Ankara, but the rest of the story is the same".

The information given about the reasons why these men are employed to do 'cleaning work' is not clear. The main issue in this item, which is the inefficient personnel policies of Ankara's council was overshadowed by a heavy emphasis on the outfits of the employees.

7.2.3. Covering Crime Stories

Crime news include stories and events on criminal incidents and activities, police responses and initiatives, as well as any judicial and penal follow-up on specific cases, and also overviews and trends in criminal matters. Crime has always been one of staple ingredients of popular news.³⁰ With the commercialisation of television news, crime is becoming more and more of an important component of news programmes, and sometimes forms the content of other news genres such as reality shows, which will be explored in the following sections of the chapter. One of the reasons for the increasing use of crime stories is that they are cheap to produce. They are also relatively easy to obtain with the established and patterned symbiotic relationships with the major sources of crime news- the police and the courts. Moreover, crime stories, particularly dramatic and violent ones attract more audience attention, and thus increases the profitability of the media company.

However, we know little about what crime news means to readers, viewers and listeners. The relative research attempted to find out why audiences find such stories appealing, how they make sense of them, and what kind of meaning they might derive from them. Four insightful speculations based on qualitative content analysis are to be found in Roshier, Katz, Dahlgren, and Schlesinger and Tumber. They believe that crime news is integrated into everyday problem solving about often quite unconnected practical issues in people's lives. Bob Roshier's study suggests the hypothesis that crimes do not become newsworthy because of what they tell about crime, but because crimes may be especially telling about other things of interests to readers.³¹ Jack Katz investigates the distinctive aspects of form or content that make daily news reports of crime continuously interesting to the modern public.³² He concludes that "crime news takes its interest from

³⁰. Doris A. Graber, 'The Infotainment Quotient in Routine Television News: A Director's Perspective', *Discourse and Society*, 1994, 5(4): 483-508.

³¹. Bob Roshier, 'The Selection of Crime News by British Press', in S. Cohen, and J. Young (eds), *The Manufacture of News*, 1981, Beverly Hills: Sage, pp. 40-51.

³². Jack Katz, 'What Crime 'News'?', *Media Culture and Society*, 1987, 9: 47-35.

routinely encountered dilemmas, not from concerns focused on crime...In reading crime news, people recognise and use the moral tale within the story to orient themselves towards existential dilemmas they cannot help but confront".³³ Schlesinger and Tumber's analysis of crime news points to "its proximity to fiction" and "the role of voyeurism in the detailed reportage offered of sexual crime".³⁴ They conclude that reporting crime is much more than crime-reporting:

"The sensational reporting of sexual crime and violent crime, the representation of victims, dramatic reconstructions, fictional representations, stories of police failure or corruption, and various combinations of the above, have all been cited as possible or potential inducers of fear".³⁵

Research indicated that the content of crime news diverges widely from the patterns available in official statistics. Dahlgren argues that crime news offers "little knowledge about crime in society in any deeper sense, such as background, patterns and consequences".³⁶ Grabosky and Wilson in their study of crime news on Australian media argue that "the news media do not provide the public with all the information necessary for them adequately to appraise the state of crime and criminal justice policy in Australia".³⁷

During the time period under investigation here crime news was the second most extensively covered category of popular news on Turkish private television channels. Most crime reporting appeared on Star. Crime news on this channel consisted of murders, fraud, police and torture. They included:

-*"Edes and Civan's trial restarted"*

-*"A six year old girl is found raped and murdered"*

-*"Fraud in the USA"*

³³. *ibid.*

³⁴. Philip Schlesinger and Howard Tumber, *Reporting Crime*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, p. 274.

³⁵. *ibid.*, p. 206.

³⁶. Peter Dahlgren, 'Crime News: The Fascination of the Mundane', *European Journal of Communication*, 1988, 3: 189-206.

³⁷. Peter Grabosky and Paul Wilson, *Journalism and Justice: How Crime News is Reported*, Sydney: Pluto Press, 1989, p. 130.

- *"The body of 17 year old man is found mutated in Istanbul"*
- *"Police is alarmed by a thief who climbed the fire stairs behind a bank"*
- *"One of the areas that security forces is very successful at dealing with is the fight against drugs"*
- *"Shocking raids by local authorities to shops"*
- *"Husband and wife kill the stalker"*

On ATV there were only few crime news stories:

- *"Journalist, reporting on the coal mafia was attacked"*
- *"Temizeller and Civan's crime files reopened"*
- *"A new development in Tecimer's case"*

These kind of stories on Show TV seemed to focus on the achievements of the police:

- *"Interrogation techniques by the police"*
- *"People who park illegally are pilloried, by being handcuffed and exposed before the public"*
- *"FBI arrested Basakanici who cheated banks and escaped to the USA"*

Kanal D had only three items on crime which were

- *"The trial of Civan and Edes"*
- *"The married couple killed phone stalker"*
- *"The drug dealers trial"*

On the other hand, crime news on TGRT included only two stories:

- *"Engin Civan's trial restarted"*
- *"Goknells ex-wife' compensation trial"*

Similarly, TRT did not give any coverage to mundane crime stories. The only news report TRT seemed to have in common with private channels was the story concerning the trial of the executive of a state bank (Engin Civan) as a result of his involvement in a fraud affair. On the other hand, it was only TRT, which reported the views of the Security Forces Director General on the attitude of the police in Turkey towards human rights.

- *"The trial of Edes and Civan restarted"*
- *"Maltepe police station opened"*
- *"Conscripts charged with the escape of prisoners were in court"*
- *"The Security Forces Director General Agar said police are sensitive to human rights"*

Star seemed to be the only channel which gave special importance to the presentation of crime news. These stories were presented with special logos behind the news presenter.

For example the following story was opened with a logo showing a black and white close-up silhouette of a screaming face. And the subtitle in capital letters under it read "*Brutality*":

News Presenter: "In recent months in almost every region of Turkey, *brutal murders* are being committed. The victims are mostly *defenceless little girls*. The latest one of these *hair raising murders* happened in Izmir. The police hunt is on for a *pervert who raped and killed a six years old girl*". (Star, 12.12.1994)

Star seemed to use different images for various crime stories depending the way it was committed, and who was involved. The story about a married couple who murdered the man who was stalking the wife was represented with a logo depicting the images of a knife and a hand gun. We see another interesting logo, which shows the enlarged image of the Turkish police' emblem and with the title underneath "*Police*". This report, however, was not about the activities of the police, but about a man who was caught by the police carrying out a bank robbery. He was labelled as "*robber*". It is not a new practice in Turkish news media to call arrested people with these terms whose guilt has not been proved yet. This has been observed in the press and has been criticised for reaching 'the verdict without trial'.

On Star and Show there were few long stories which focused on the response of the police to crime and the activities of the police. A report about the operations of the police on Star was presented with a title in large capital letters behind the newscaster which read "*The society*", though the story focuses on the success of the police in dealing with drug dealers:

Newspresenter: "one of the main areas where the security forces are successful is, without a doubt, the struggle against the narcotics. Star's reporter Bekir Sen was in the two different operations carried out by the police and the gendarmes".

The story continues with the details of the operations by showing selected incidents from the beginning of the raid up to the arrest of the suspects. The police and the gendarmes are the main actors of the story and tell us how much heroin was found. It appears that the reporter joined these operations after he was informed of them by the police. From the

beginning to the end there was an indirect praise for the police and for their achievement in fighting the drug traders.

As with news in Turkey, police are the major supplier of crime news to the journalists in other countries. In their analysis of the relationship between the police and the journalists in Australia, Grabosky and Wilson conclude that crime reporters convey an image of law and order that tends to reflect the police perspective "either because they themselves identify with the police position or because the police can array against them".³⁸ The press meeting of Mehmet Agar, the Director General of the Security Forces was covered by only Show TV and TRT. However, Show TV extended its story into a more detailed description of the recent activities of the police introduced by Agar. The focus of the report is the modern interrogation techniques. The report closes with the sentence that *"Agar denied systematic torture by the police, but admitted there might be some errors in practice."* TRT, on the other hand gave extensive coverage to Agar's press meeting but did not mention anything else than what Agar said. This is again related to TRT's general news policy that frames issues from the ideological stance of the state officials, and exclude the other angle of the issue that is the claim, and in some cases the evidence of the police torture. Although both reports seemed to be different from each other in terms of narrative and form, they neither gave any background to the alleged torture cases nor were they critical about the police.

7.2.4. Tragedy and Accidents

This section of the chapter will focus on those types of news stories which often contain 'accidents', 'chance events', 'mishaps', and sometimes 'personal tragedies'. Critics of television news have singled out these types of stories as symptoms of the worst excesses and trivialisations of television journalism. Relevant research noted that these stories are 'transhistorical' and 'timeless'. Langer divides these stories into two. First is the victim stories, which focus on the plight of individuals caught up in circumstances of

³⁸. *ibid.* p. 42.

adversity beyond their immediate control. Second is risk stories which put emphasis on communities or social aggregations, suddenly threatened with some form of collective danger. Langer argues that "if victim stories can be described as 'micro' narratives detailing the intense and individualised consequences of untoward occurrences community at risk stories tend towards the 'macroscopic', documentary crisis as it is expressed through broader social and physical conditions".³⁹

The category of tragedy and accidents on private channels was dominated by victim stories. Star covered:

- "Tragedy of young Ferhat who has lost his arm as a result of a wrong injection at the SSK (Social Security Institution) hospital",*
- "Traffic accident as a result of drink-drive",*
- "Esin and Ersin brothers who are fighting with a fatal disease: they need urgent help for the operation".*

This type of news on ATV included:

- "28 students were poisoned by lice medicine"*
- "A night out ended in a tragic traffic accident"*
- "The city is like blood bath: traffic accidents are claiming lives"*

Show, surprisingly, did not have any of these kind of stories. Kanal D's coverage of these type of stories looked at different dimensions of the personal tragedies, and also reported on a few risk stories. They included:

- "The cruel double standard of Europe: English hospitals are not accepting Ozlem who has a lung failure"*
- "Two ships crashed in Dardanel"*
- "The tragedy of people who migrate from villages to the cities"*
- "The crash of two ships in Dardanel strait"*
- "Erosion threat in Zonguldak"*

TGRT had only one item which was about a *"plane crash in America"*. TRT, on the other hand, was concerned more with natural and human-made disasters:

- "Crash in Dardanel strait"*
- "Earthquake in Erzurum"*
- "Avalanche in Gumushane claims teacher's life"*

³⁹. Langer, op.cit., p.105.

The main focus of the victim stories on private channels was on the person in a tragedy. However, some of these stories tended to attribute the misfortunes of these victims to some national, and international institutions. Star's report on a young man whose arm was amputated as a result of a wrong injection before his appendix operation, was critical of SSK Hospital. Logo reads "*Health*":

Newscaster: "Today the corridors of Sisli law-court became a stage to the drama of Ferhat, just in the *spring of his life*, who has lost his arm due to receiving the wrong injection. Young Ferhat, who has sued the SSK for 1 billion Turkish liras compensation for his loss even though this won't bring his arm back met with a bitter surprise. The SSK was asking him to pay 61 million TL for the operation expenses. Ferhat had not only lost his arm but also was in debt".

The majority of victim stories tell us the everyday life of the people who are involved in these stories, assuming that this is something we are all completely familiar to. An ordinary routine world which we are encouraged to assume is trouble-free and stable is established in flash-backs. Then, the life of the victim goes down from the conventional order of his routine life to a period of damage, crisis, or disruption. The film starts with focusing on Ferhat in his close-up. Once more we are reminded that the age of the victim: "*he is just 19 years old*". Then the film shows us where the victim works and lives: "*Ferhat is the only son of his family, who are struggling for their daily bread. He is a waitressing at a coffee shop*". The victim is portrayed as one of the millions of poor people, who live on the edge of the poverty, and who are powerless and hapless. The report tells us that Ferhat, the victim cannot afford what the hospital asked him to pay, which was 61 million Turkish Liras. Star's report is critical of the SSK. There are two aspects in this story. First is the focus on the severity of a particular medical condition, and second is the consequence of this on the victim's life. After giving the details of how Ferhat became a victim as a result of negligence and ignorance, the reporter calls what the SSK did to Ferhat as "*unbelievably shameless*". In the meantime, the camera focus on Ferhat's amputated arm few times. After these shots, the nurse and other hospital staff, who were accused of causing the incident were shown being questioned in the court. Towards the end of the report the victim is interviewed: "*They want 60 million liras. I*

don't have that money. Instead I can give my only arm". Then we see the reporter in the empty court room saying that "Young Ferhat loses his arm and also is taken to the court by the SSK. Poor helpless young man! Should he cry over the money he can't pay or over the fact that he will be disabled for life?"

One of the very interesting characteristics of the reporter's comments here is their strong emotional pull. The use of this kind of language has been an intriguing feature of tabloid news in Turkish press and television. They deploy certain linguistic patterns which are specific to colloquial discourse and figurative usage.

Waterhouse points out that tabloid style takes its references from a wide variety of sources- TV shows, film titles, advertising slogans, sporting events, song lyrics, political jargon, catch-phrases, clichés, and that vast repository at large of popular quotations, rhymes and snatches, which it juggles into a deft montage of puns, allusions and word-play.⁴⁰ Human interest and dramatic news stories indulge in poetic and parallel phrase structures, metaphors, metonyms, phrases, figurative usage, which are utilised in daily language. In Turkish, 'spring' figuratively means 'youth', and 'bread' culturally connotes 'existence'. Although they are used by Star's journalist the usage of figurative language are heard also on other channels. By employing colloquial expressions, culturally familiar and popular in Turkish society private channels seem to appeal to a widest audience possible.

In another news report on Star, same pattern of language is repeated when we are told the story of two brothers who have liver failures. Logo reads "*Health*", but the content of the story is dominated by the pain and suffering of the Mucur family:

Newscaster: Esin and Ersin brothers from Izmir are just in *the spring of their lives*. But they both are living hand in hand with death. Each day, death is getting nearer and nearer to these two brothers, who suffer from a liver failure.

On the film, the camera focuses on the crying brothers, and then close up on the eldest child in front of the canary cage. After we hear the details of the story the reporter interviews the father who says that they cannot afford their operation, and they need financial help. In the meantime the camera focuses on the mother's face and her tears. She

⁴⁰. K. Waterhouse, *Waterhouse on Newspaper Style*, London: Viking, 1989, p.38.

holds one of the younger child: *"The mother is watching, in desperation, her children gradual death with tears. Some benevolent people are helping the Mucur family but it is not enough for the operations"*. We see the whole family in same shot and the children in close-up again. The reporter on the film says: *"If 2 billion liras cannot be found the brothers Esin and Ersin will close their eyes to life"*.

On Kanal D a victim story was told in a way that has not been found in earlier research. The story is about a 11 year old girl, Ozlem who suffers from lung failure. Subtitle reads: *"Two faces of the West"*

News presenter: "Europeans, who continuously criticise Turkey for human rights abuses, and threaten us with the sword of Damocles, have, by their cruel double standards abandoned misfortunate Ozlem, who has only months to live".

Film (voice over): "The real face of Europe, which inveighs against, and humiliates Turkey for her human rights records, has been revealed by what they did to Ozlem. Westerners, who were so alarmist after the DeP trial, and requested that Turkey send Leyla Zana (Kurdish ex-DeP MP) to Europe for treatment, are now leaving 11 year old Ozlem Binnaz to die. This tiny, poor, child, who so urgently needs lung transplantation in Britain, is not accepted by English hospitals on the grounds that she is not a European citizen".

The reporter interviews with the mother and ask her to explain why Ozlem could not go England for her operation. Then, the story provides the details of the severity of her condition and as with Ferhat's story, emphasis is placed on the destitution of the victim. *"Ozlem, who is the daughter of a street salesman lives in a basement in miserable conditions"*. Then we hear that part of her heart no longer functions. She has to be connected to the oxygen tubes for 16 hours a day. She can't go to school...etc. In the end, the reporter finishes the story with a question in resentment: *"We are asking a question to the westerners, who criticise Turkey for human rights, and always put pressure on us. Did they not abuse human rights altogether when they did not allow Ozlem to have an operation [in Britain]?"*.

In this story, the reporter constructs his story on presumed shared frame and belief in large section of Turkish society that is resentful towards Europe, because of its policies concerning Turkey's membership to European Union, and its criticism for human rights

abuses. The meaning is mediated through the fragility of cultural perception, shared both by secularists and Islamists in Turkey, that 'Europe' treats 'us' as if it is a police force, regulating, supervising, controlling internal affairs in Turkey. The fragile self-perception of 'colonised entity' in Turkey, whose conceptions of historical marginalisation are enforced by political and cultural realities of the present, comes to surface as an expression of contempt for the 'civilised' West. The fragments of popular discourse in daily politics and culture, is weaved into positions of 'we' and 'them' by presenting Ozlem, the ailing girl as the 'helpless', 'desperate', and 'rejected' in a polarised opposition to Europe as the 'powerful', 'mean', and 'cruel'.

ATV's reports on traffic accidents shows crashed cars, dead and wounded people and the efforts of rescue teams and the police. They give the details of the number of people killed and wounded, and the reasons why the accidents happened. The traffic accident news has been one of the routine events on Turkish news media. Every year these accidents claim more lives than any other cause in Turkey. However, media report these events as tragic occurrences and most of the time there is no in-dept investigation.

What was interesting to find out here is that the news stories concerning the community at large were not covered by private channels, except one story on Kanal D. The sheep accident in Dardanel was reported by TRT three times during the sample week, but only once by Kanal D. Dardanel strait is an important water road between Europe, the Middle East and Russia. Any accident, or problem which prevents normal flow of traffic in the strait cause long delays in delivering goods between those countries. The indifference of private channels in covering such an important accident, and its environmental and financial consequences can be explained by the perceived importance of other stories on personal tragedies by the editors, who evaluate events in terms of audience ratings. The earthquake in Erzurum (the largest city in Eastern Anatolia), and the death of a teacher as a result of avalanche was ignored by private channels, and mentioned only by TRT.

7.2.5. Advertising or News?

One of the indications of the commercialisation and tabloidisation of Turkish television news has been the introduction of items which cover the products and the activities of businesses. These stories are usually placed at the end of the news programmes. TRT was the only channel which did not report any of these events. The increase in this type of news story has led to a controversy over whether they are simply the extension of commercials produced in the form of news.

The main news programmes of some private channels also provided coverage for the business connections of their mother companies. For instance TGRT reported on the companies which belong to Ihlas Holdings, which also owns TGRT.⁴¹ Star reported seven news stories covering the activities of some well-known companies. These were a fashion show by Jordache blue jean company and its Turkish representative Yasar Textile, Telsim's, a telecommunication company meeting of its countrywide representative and the news mentions its new service of mobile phones, Renault and its new help service network, Elidor Shampoo's new product promotion night at Hilton Hotel, Vakko Department Store and its New Year decorations, Zeki Triko's new swimming costume designs.

On ATV there were three such stories. New Year Eve Party at Vakko, Zeki Triko, the swimming suit designer company and the Renault Help network. Show TV covered the twentieth year anniversary of the Cyprus Turkish Airlines, Marie Claire magazine, and Zeki Triko. Kanal D reported the new service of Bank Express in Istanbul, the Elidor's party at Hilton Hotel, Pera Palace and Zeki Triko. TGRT had six items, which were about the houses built by Ihlas Holdings which also owns TGRT, the new building of Orsa Holdings in Germany, the advice from the executive of Vakif Financial Leasing to businessmen, the new products of Elidor shampoo, Renault, the award Tur-Otel.

⁴¹. For more information on the ownership structures of private channels see Chapter 2.

7.3. Reality-Based Programming

In the 1990s reality shows which deal with criminal incidents or actual police cases, disasters and dangerous events, illnesses, accidents and unusual situations as well as the melodrama of real life such as family problems, missing people have become one of the most important genre on the schedules of television channels. Challenging the established forms of journalism, reality programmes were first born in the USA. The profit these shows generated in 1993 was more than 1 billion US dollars, with the further advantage that the networks own these shows, unlike most of their entertainment programmes.⁴² Some of the most popular of these programmes are *Cops* which reports the routine patrols of police officers, *America's Most Wanted*, which is a mix of re-enactments of usually violent and sexual crimes, *Rescue 911*, which consists of re-enactments of spectacular rescues. Most of these shows are crime-centred and lives of ordinary people in exceptional circumstances, particularly in the public domain of law and order.

Reality shows have made substantial inroads in different countries. However, these programmes are seen as possible threats to the public service broadcasting values in West European countries. Although the major concerns of reality-based programmes showed little difference across different countries their production values needed to be adapted to the specific cultures in which they were produced. Kilborn observes that in Britain and France resistance to the US models of reality programming has favoured the development of "styles and forms of RP [Reality Programming]... more in tune with national and cultural priorities" and characterises French reality programming in particular as concentrating on topics of "love, sex and family relationships" because it was assumed that "audiences would not take kindly to fast-moving, action-packed, crime-obsessed reality shows in the American mould".⁴³ During the early 1990s, reality shows have become an increasingly frequent new feature of French television programming. In a

⁴². Georgina Henry, 'The Prime Time for Infotainment', *Media Guardian*, 26.4. 1993, p.15.

⁴³. Richard Kilborn, 'How Real Can You Get?': Recent Developments in 'Reality' Television, *European Journal of Communication*, 1994, 9(4): 421-439.

society, which claims to be the foremost purveyor of high cultural standards and protectionist against American cultural products, reality shows, admittedly based on US or Italian models, are being criticised for representing the "worst excesses of a lowest-common-denominator programming".⁴⁴ In Britain, criticism towards reality shows centred on the suggestion that they have posed a threat to other forms of factual programmes, such as current affairs and documentary. However, some television executives argue in favour of reality programming that it fulfils two of the main requirements of public service broadcasting; entertainment and information, and that it makes factual programming more accessible and popular. Most research on British reality programming have been concerned with the programmes *Crime Watch UK* and *999*.⁴⁵ In recent years the number of these type of programmes increased on British television.

Reality programmes involve recording of events about the individual groups on location with the help of lightweight camera and video equipment. In order to simulate true-life stories, they use various forms of dramatised construction. In the final stage, this raw material is edited to compose an attractively packaged television programme. In addition, as the entertainment value of the programme is crucial for a continuous audience attention, a well-known presenter is employed and various strategies, such as presenter talk, verite material, dramatic construction and audience participation or a hybrid mix of these are utilised.⁴⁶ Although these strategies may show differences depending on the form and content of the individual reality programmes they all have common features. They report authentic real life events edited with visually exciting and entertaining material. Moreover, events depicted in these programmes are rarely placed in a wider social context.

⁴⁴. Hugh Dauncey, 'French 'Reality Television' ', *European Journal of Communication*, 1996, 11(1): 83-106.

⁴⁵. See Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse*, London: Edward Arnold, 1995; Richard Kilborn, 'How Real Can You Get?: Recent Developments in 'Reality' Television, *European Journal of Communication*, 1994, 9(4): 421-439; Ib Bondobjerg, 'Public Discourse/Private Fascination: Hybridization in 'True-Life-Story' Genres', *Media, Culture & Society*, 1996, 18: 27-45.

⁴⁶. Richard Kilborn, *op.cit.*, p. 423.

One of the powerful explanations offered for the success of reality shows has been the commercial imperatives. Reality shows are inexpensive to produce. Technological innovations such as light-weight cameras made it possible to shoot anywhere. The continuing audience interest gave the stimulus to these programme to flourish and to proliferate. With the development of reality television, Bill Nichols argues, "the boundaries between fact and fiction, narrative and exposition, story telling and reporting" were blurred "as the news stresses audience participation in the ritual of news production itself rather than in the world outside the frame".⁴⁷ He points out that reality television imitates the features of standard television news and the tabloid journalism, oscillating "between actual situations and events of startling horror, intense danger, morbid conduct, desperate need, or bizarre coincidence (raw) and cover stories that reduce such evidence to truism or platitudes (the cooked)", which he terms "the ideological reduction" of reality television.⁴⁸

On a macro level, hybrid genres point to the possible and much discussed transformation of public sphere. In Habermas tradition, the hybridisation of private and public discourse is often seen as a sign of simple decline, where commercial powers of the system suppress the forces of the lifeworld.⁴⁹ As a result of "the hybridisation of factual and fictional elements" the private life stories have been lifted into public discourse.⁵⁰ Bondøjberg argues that with the arrival of new factual forms we have been witnessing the democratisation of an old public service discourse. However, he stresses that there is a need for critical perspectives since these programmes do not necessarily create the basis for public knowledge. And there is also a question of balance and relevance. Bondejberg concludes that reality programmes are the update of a paternalistic

⁴⁷. Bill Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture*, Indiana Polis: Indiana University Press, 1994, p. 43.

⁴⁸. *ibid.*, p.44-45.

⁴⁹. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Cambridge: MA: MIT Press, 1989.

⁵⁰. Ib Bondøjberg, 'Public Discourse/Private Fascination: Hybridization in 'True-Life-Story' Genres', *Media, Culture & Society*, 1996, 18: 27-45.

public service discourse to include a more democratic selection of topics and voices outside the traditionally defined public interest, and these tendencies are clearly a product of commercialism, exploitation of all areas of life for entertainment and for the benefit of the consumers, and thus to make more profit. Other important ethical issues which have been brought to the fore with the rise of reality-based formats are the invasion of privacy, the exploitation of emotions and sensationalism, and the degrading standards of investigative journalism.

7.3.1. Reality Programmes on Turkish Television

Since the introduction of commercial television stations reality shows have been an increasingly familiar feature of television programming in Turkey. With factual programming gaining importance some imported formats like 'reality shows' and 'paparazzi' programmes have been introduced one after the other by every private channel. TRT, on the other hand, resisted to this trend. The reality shows ranges from crime and cop to accidents and variety talk shows, but the most popular ones have been crime oriented ones. Reality shows which, began with *Sicagi Sicagina (Hot on the Spot)* on Show TV soon became one of the most popular and controversial genres. However, they were criticised for broadcasting bloody and gruesome pictures of the victims involved in accidents or murders with little respect for the private lives of ordinary people. These programmes, which can be produced by a small team, have a persistently high audience rating. In December 1994, six of the 25 news programmes were reality shows. As has been the case in other countries, these programmes have had considerable success in terms of audience ratings. Among them ATV's *Police İmdat (Police Help)*, and *Kayıp Araniyor (Searching for the Missing)* achieved audience ratings of 11.06% and 7.68% respectively, while *Hot on the Spot* of Show TV received a rating of 7.72%. The reality shows on Turkish television channels resembled the third pages of daily newspapers which contain crime and accident stories. They were criticised for broadcasting bloody and gruesome pictures of the victims involved in accidents or murders with little respect for the impact of these images on the viewers, and especially children.

According to an audience survey, conducted by Istanbul University, Faculty of Communications, Turkish audience watched reality shows 'to see facts'. Ironically, however, 61% of 210 interviewees believed that some of the topics that reality shows covered were exaggerated or even acted. Moreover, 52% believed that reality shows did not have any social responsibility, but were produced to attract maximum audiences. Therefore, 57% were in favour of some restrictions for reality shows. However, the findings of the survey revealed that not all viewers had a negative view of reality shows. When they were asked what kind of topics these programmes should portray, 31% of respondents said they would prefer police matters such as murder, rape, suicide, assault and raids, while 30% admitted that they allowed their children to watch violent scenes.⁵¹ According to the findings of a recent audience research in Turkey, people who watch reality shows are mostly between the age group of 16 and 23 with low income and low educational level. However, the news and current affairs programmes are preferred particularly by an audience group with higher income, and high education level.⁵² Some commentators argued that behind the popularity of reality shows there lay the problems of Turkish society:

"A society, urbanising rapidly, suffering from high inflation, experiencing all negative consequences of the corrupted regime and, most importantly, lacking any value system provides a rich source for these kinds of programmes."⁵³

Haluk Sahin argues that the inadequacy of social and political institutions, and of justice system in Turkey to deliver fair treatment to all citizens has been the main impetus for the high audience ratings of reality programmes:

"Why do these suffering miserable people appear on these programmes? Why are they telling their secrets on television screens? Because the judiciary system in Turkey is not functioning well, because people do not believe in the bureaucratic

⁵¹. *Milliyet*, daily newspaper, 14 April, 1994.

⁵². Nurdogan Rigel, 'Reality Show ve Haber Programlarının 1994-1995 Karsilastirmali Etki Analizi' (Comparative Effect Analysis of Reality Shows and Current Affairs Programmes in 1994-1995), *Yeni Turkiye* (New Turkey), 1996, 2: 590-652.

⁵³. Sedat Ergin, *Hürriyet*, 28 June 1995.

system any more, because people's trust to the state is shaken, because the conscience of the society is not effective. These powerless people hope that they can draw some attention to their problems by being in front of television cameras. They are trying to seek justice and compensation through media. Reality show programmes have a particular function in societies with widespread helplessness and desperation. People see the producers of these programmes not only as television people but also saviours."⁵⁴

Asu Aksoy, on the other hand, suggests that the viewers want to see real characters and people who are just like them, or their neighbours.⁵⁵ This is achieved by involving the viewers as if they are there and witnessing what is happening. One of the most important consequences of these programmes, she argues, is that people who used to be strangers have begun to be informed about each other's existence and problems through television. It should be noted that most people who appear on these shows live either in the shanty towns of Istanbul and other big cities in Turkey, and have a low socio-economic status. This might explain the reason why reality shows are not very popular among the middle income group people.

7.3.2. Case Studies

The format, presentation and structure of reality show programmes demonstrate similarities and differences from one channel to another. Some of them focus only court cases while others deal with the mixed stories such as bizarre events, crime, accidents fraud, kidnapping, or police follow-ups. Here I will analyse three most popular reality programmes.

7.3.2.1. Söz Fato'da (Fato's Turn to Speak, Kanal D, 28.8.1995)

This programme reflects a large degree of personal involvement from 'Fato', Fatma Girik, a famous veteran star of Turkish cinema, who is very popular with the audience

⁵⁴. Haluk Sahin, 'Reality Show'lar Caresizlige Cevap' (Reality Shows are response to Desperation), *Hurriyet*, 8 July 1995.

⁵⁵. Asu Aksoy, 'Soz Niye Fato'da' (Why is it Fato's Turn to Speak), *Hurriyet*, 25 July 1996.

because of her bold character. In her programme, she pursues stories, brought to her attention generally by the people who were personally affected by them, and tries to resolve their problems. This can take the form of finding a kidnapped child or uniting long lost families during which, Fato adopts the role of a caring mother or sister. Since its launch in September 1994, *Fato's Turn to Speak* proved extremely successful, and with ratings of over 10%, came well ahead of many current affairs and studio discussion programmes. Its successful career continued on Kanal D, to which Fatma Girik and her team transferred in January 1995, as part of its bid to become one of the major private stations.

The particular episode from Kanal D, which will be analysed here, contained seven stories and two commercial breaks in addition to fragments of other programmes. During the programme Fato, the presenter, is seen addressing the audience both from 'outside' as an authoritative narrator, and from 'inside', as an 'on the spot' reporter. At the beginning of the programme Fatma Girik addresses her audience from the studio: *"We are going to tell you a story you won't have heard until today"*. Then a still picture of Fato's eyes appears on the screen with the title of the programme, and we cut to the footage of the first story. We hear a young man speaking in a deep voice- full of emotion. *"The thing which surprised Fato most was the teeth marks on this little child."* On the film the genital organ of the baby is covered by a visual effect, whilst the camera focuses on his wounds. Fato addresses her next question to the mother of the baby: *"What is this? What about the wounds on his mouth?"*. The mother replies: *"They are all caused by biting"*. We hear the voice over again: *"The maternal grandmother is also complaining about her son-in-law's behaviour whilst the mother of the child weeps. It is hard to comprehend what she has been through, living in fear of a husband who haunts her even at her father's home. Fato and her crew are by now in a dilemma as to what line to take over this difficult situation, and are about to attempt an interview with the father, at his house, when he appears at his wife's home, woken from a drunken stupor"* we are told, the baby finally having fallen asleep. The father finally turned up." We see Fato asking the father: *why are treating your child like this?* Father: *I was unemployed and depressed, so I bit him.* Fato: *But, what kind*

of a behaviour is this? How can you call yourself a human being and do such a thing? The father responds, not in answer to her question: *"I don't deny doing this, I did it because I was so depressed"*.

"Fato takes the mother with her and sets off to see the gendarme. Following the complaint they make there, they go to the town health clinic, since the baby urgently needed treatment. The doctor then began examining the baby. He too was shocked when he saw the dark purple bruises on the child's body resulting from the bites. The doctor's report is then taken to the gendarme. The father, in front of the gendarme's car looks very worried. Having returned home, Fato continues listening to the householders. The wife weeps as she thinks of the things her husband has done. We wonder if this man will ever have pangs of conscience" as we listen to him speaking on the film: "I beat and bite my wife and my children when I get depressed, so It wouldn't be right for my children to stay with me, because I might kill them. I am a monstrous father". Fato speaks: "Fatma (the mother) wants a divorce, Tuncay (the father) wants to go into therapy but he says even if he gets help he will do the same things again". The voice over claims that "The state will look after the children since their parents cannot. The local people of Dalaman surrounded Fato as she departs, relieved at handling this case successfully. And we leave the sick father reading his newspaper in the garden of the gendarme station. We wish him a quick recovery and the mother and her children a peaceful life."

We now pan to Fato in the studio when she speaks to the camera again: "I think this programme is full of monstrous people. And now we bring another 'monster' to your screens. My dear audiences we are calling them monsters because of their actions, we don't have any personal hostility against them. We should be conscious of the fact that it is society which pushes them to behave this way. And we should seek ways to rehabilitate them, whilst protecting the rights of the victims. We now turn to another monster and look at his actions."

The second story in the programme was told in the same way. It concerns a family whose son had been killed by their son-in law. After telling the story in various ways it concludes by telling Fato's efforts to alert the police, assisting them to catch the murderer,

and once more the audience is told how this story set an example of 'independent' journalism. Then Fato appears in the studio wishing *"the sorrowful family lots of happiness in their future life"*.

She carries on reporting the third *"drama"* of the programme, which concentrates on a *"tearful mother, and her daughter who, as fate would have it, fell prey to 'hostessing' and prostitution to earn a living."* After talking to various people and cooperating with the police, Fato and her team finally find the girl in the hotel, where she and her friends work as prostitutes. We also witness and hear that *"Fato disregarded the threats"* from the men who were using these girls as *"their capital"*. The camera, meanwhile shows us these men trying to prevent the camera to shoot them. What is different in this story is that there is a reconstruction of the event in which Fato plays the main character, the young girl. It is being told by voice over like a story *"The girl was very upset that her father was asking daily if she has found a job yet. Every morning she scoured the job advertisements in the newspapers, line by line, but she simply could not find a suitable job. One day, when she was reading the newspapers she saw a job advertisement which would change her life forever."* On the film we see her telling her father that she has found a job, and she sets off for the work place. *"She never suspected anything. She was very naive. She could never guessed how bad the intentions of these people were."* The man in the office tells her that the work is in Edirne (a city in the Tracian part of Turkey). *"She agrees to go on this fairly long journey to Edirne because she is desperate to work."* They go together to a coach station. *"She did not suspect anything at the coach station either. She was 'sold' without her consent. She was sold in a way that was even worse than in the popular days of slavery. She was sold on the eve of the 21st century ever giving her consent to the transaction"*. On the film some men exchange money and celebrate their deal, then the camera zooms in on Fatma Girik. As she realises at last what's happening, she cries with great anguish, and shouts: *"I was supposed to be childminderrrr..."* and the picture freezes on her crying face in close-up. The voice over tells us that *"This was another story to learn from, but, thank God, Fato was there and the event had a happy ending"*. We then turn to Fato in the studio: *"Fortunately, this story too had a happy ending, but our*

programme is continuing. After a short break, we will see which events we managed to resolve happily".

We are now shown fragments of the stories that will come up next in the programme. A mother whose small child was kidnapped and asked help from Fato. *"Here are the pictures from this breathless rescue operation story which travels from Istanbul to Ankara and then on to Burdur. How Fato rescued a girl who run away from her home. In a moment..."* After the programme clips and commercial break, the fourth story is shown, about a woman whose husband has taken all her furniture and her child away. The woman sees Fato at her office at Kanal D. Fato's team tries to help her. Story five, focuses on a girl who accuses her brother of raping her. In the film it says that when Fato got the phone call from this girl, her team went to Kirsehir as soon as they could. As in the previous stories this story is played out by Fatma Girik and other actors. This story ends with no conclusion as Fato cannot find any evidence to back the victim's allegations. The sixth story begins with a word of advise: *"Here is another tragic event. Particularly young people, young girls, who run away from home, should watch this report carefully".* It covers the tale of a 15 year old girl who left home, and, also of her mother who turns to Fato for help. Finally Fato finds the girl with the cooperation of the police. In the studio Fatma Girik make the final comment: *"We hope our girls have learned their lesson from this event".*

In the final fragment of the programme we hear from the voice over that *"Fato's Turn to Speak has not finished and will return after a break. In our final section we have our news this time with no monster and no victim. How can this be possible? Don't go away. We'll be back."* After the second programme advertisements and commercial break, the seventh story in the programme focus on a book campaign. Fato appears in the studio and says: *"My dear audiences, so far we have always spoken of nothing but tragedies and presented only dark pictures. Because the purpose of our programme has been to exhibit problems and show solutions to them. We never intend to make you depressed by bringing these cases to your screens every two weeks. In fact, we wish these things never happened, and we never had to report them, but this is all part of life in our country. Now*

we are going to tell you a very happy event". We then cut to a film that shows how Fato helped students at Ankara College of Trading in the book campaign for their school.

Fato's Turn to Speak has characteristics similar to tabloid news, and reality programmes analysed in earlier studies. The seven categories, with regard to thematic infrastructure of crime news, identified by Dahlgren, which are 'quirkiness', 'audacity', 'evil and cruelty', 'greed and other foibles', 'abuse of trust', 'threats to the social order', and 'defence of social order' offer a useful explanation for the stories covered in the reality shows. Reports in this programme centred on the category of 'evil and cruelty'; the deeds and violent crimes against defenceless victims, which "evoke a response of both repulsion and also a wonder over 'how anybody could do that to another person'."⁵⁶ What is different or novel in this programme, compared to American and European ones, however, is that at the end, or at the beginning of each report there is a moral high ground taken by the presenter herself. The reconstruction of the actual events, are played by actors in European reality programmes, for example in *Crime Watch UK*. However, here we see the presenter appearing in the lead role of these 'mini-dramas'. Although she is in her late fifties, she plays the victims regardless of their age or appearance. As the research argued, we see a hybrid of fact and fiction in this programme, as a consequence of the journalistic and dramatic involvement of Fatma Girik, who has a high profile amongst the big stars of Yesilçam, the Turkish Hollywood. The goal of Fato as a 'hero' is to overcome a villain, rescue a victim, to succeed in a quest or task, and to make up for a lack. She appears to protect people in endangered situations and threatened by 'monsters'.

7.3.2.2. Sicagi Sicagina, (Hot on the Spot, Show TV, 30.8.1995)

This programme is presented by a theatre actor called Cem Kurtoglu, a well-known theatrical performer with a strong authoritative voice. This episode had two commercial breaks and included fragments of other programmes. After Show TV's logo which reads "Reality Show". The presenter in the studio says: *"Hot on the Spot, the*

⁵⁶. Peter Dahlgren, 'Crime News: The Fascination of the Mundane', *European Journal of Communication*, 1988, 3, p. 201.

programme without a rival, in which we show you interesting and striking facts and issues as they happen". Unlike *Fato's Turn to Speak*, the presenter does not appear on the location, but he opens and concludes every story. Nor do the programme team try to solve the problems encountered by the individuals involved in the events presented. Similarly at the beginning and at the end of each story the voice over and the presenter conclude the story, with advice from which the audience is assumed to learn a lesson.

The opening sequence of the programme shows flames covering the screen accompanied by a fast music, mixed with police sirens, the title of the programme appearing in caption gradually over the flames, which then disappear. We see police cars at night on the streets, explosions, fires, and wounded people. The title then reappears slowly until it becomes fully written over the flames: Presenter in the studio: *"Hot on the Spot is ever-ready to present you what is happening, with all the facts of what is happening, and with witnesses too. Hot on the Spot never gives up the hunt for truths determined to bring the facts into the light of day, always updating you with new developments. A traffic accident in Beylerbeyi on 25th of August, and the ambulance which could not reach the location presented an extraordinary scene. 26 year old Yuksel Ozer had to wait for the ambulance for more than an hour. Our programme crew was there instantly, but nothing could be done for him because the ambulance had not come."*

When they cut to film, the voice over informs us of the event as it happens while we witness the scene through the camera lens. The programme has voyeuristic qualities without any discussion or background to the event. The narrative discourse is revealed in a typically Turkish style leaning heavily on a dramatic rendition delivered in the 'past perfect tense', containing intense drama concerning individuals, frequent emotional outbursts and shocking details of the events.

The voice over tells the audience how an ordinary morning turned into a tragedy for the victim, whose car hit an iron fence, and flew into the garden of a primary school. *"The accident was caused by a 'sleepy' driver, running late for work."* The voice over then tells us, in detail, how the accident happened, and how the victim was helped by local people and the programme team: *"We were there immediately and we too were*

trying to help the wounded man." film meanwhile shows the man lying on the floor in agony and a policeman next to him: *"Hot on the Spot, and the Police were there with him but the ambulance had not arrived yet."* The film shows the efforts of locals and the victim's friend to ease his pain: *"The young driver's situation was getting worse as the minutes passed. It was very sad not being able to help him while filming him like this".* Then the voice over tells that *"The unfortunate man was at last taken to the hospital. But the people in the area were still living with the hours of terror."* The story involves ordinary people, who happened to witness closely the drama of another ordinary individual, and emphasises their helplessness, in facing a situation like this. Finally, we are told of the agony of the victim's mother and see how the programme team gave her moral support: *"the victim's mother was in tears, and Hot on the Spot immediately tried to console her."*

The presenter in the studio finishes the story with the following emotive statement, delivered with a hint of resentment: *"Is human life so cheap? How can an ambulance in the middle of Istanbul, when the traffic isn't heavy, not reach the location of an accident in time. Considering the fact that hours, minutes, and even seconds are all of crucial importance to a person's life when involved in such an accident".*

Then we see fragments of the following stories in a diamond visual effect which is surrounded by red and yellow colours and the programme's title. We hear the voice over telling us the headlines of each story: *"Is the old woman the victim of a thief?"* (On the film we see the dead body of a woman in a 'blood bath' on the floor.) *The curtain on this mysterious murder has not yet been unveiled."*, *"Terrifying traffic accidents as a result of mistakes, negligence, and rage".* [Crashed cars and men punching each other], *"High voltage line claimed life again"* [A dead man on the street], *"Explosions in four different places in Istanbul. Bombs cause violence"* ['Bloody' people], *"Breathless chase: A man about to sell his 16 year old wife, caught instantly. The tragic bargain and its aftermath"* (visual fragments from the event). Between each commercial break the presenter reminds the audience that: *"Hot on the Spot is continuing with the hottest moments. Do not go away."*

As with *Fato's Turn to Speak*, at the end of each story the presenter of this programme finalises the event with a question, which is directed towards the malfunctioning institutions of the society. However, the programme focuses on the suffering of the victims rather than the causes and the effects of the deficiencies on the society at large, and present the possible solutions to change things for the better.

7.3.2.3. Polis İmdat (Police Help, ATV, 6.9.1995)

This programme is the Turkish version of the American reality programme *Cops*. In describing this programme Bill Nichols points out that: "we are there on the street, with the cops. We share their point of view and subjectivity. We are invited to nod and wink with them. They, together with us, their tele-partners in reality, can move on to other situations, other risks and potential disruptions to the social order. Once again, we learn 'the system works'...patrolling them, peering over the shoulder of the police, confirms the order law produces ".⁵⁷ This show explicitly portray law enforcement officers as the good force fighting 'evil'.

The opening sequences shows the blue, blinking lights of a police car, we then see a number of items belonging to police and detective work. Shots from the police operations and raids, people caught by the police, police in training and then the title roles: "*Police*". We see police patrolling, in the police station, and interrogating people. Surrounding these images is a distorted visual effect, which slowly covers whole screen with the title "Police Help" in red then turning to white. Then it cuts to a caption which reads: "*Everybody is innocent (underlined with yellow) until proven guilty*" read by the same voice over.

On the film we see police lined up in front of their superiors. Voice over: "*The security forces, who are carrying out a fierce fight against the dark forces of society, are on duty again. In a minute you will see at close range, breathless operations from the*

⁵⁷. Bill Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture*, Indiana Polis: Indiana University Press, 1994, pp. 44, 46.

dark streets of Istanbul to the hub of our city's entertainment centres'." (We see police are running to their vans, to a fast sound track, and off they speed in their cars)

The first story is about an argument between neighbours, following a fire. As with the two reality shows analysed above, some reports in this programme conclude with the programme's view of the event. In this story a voice over tells us: *"This event brings some questions to mind. How right is it to turn the event of a fire into a moral issue? What right do neighbours have to interfere with each other's private lives?"* In the second story the Police are called to follow a car and its occupants, who are thought to have been involved in a fight. The camera crew inside the police car. To the accompaniment of high suspense music we follow the car until it comes to standstill. The chase is always *"breathless"*.

The third event is about money fraud. This time the cameras are in the police station. Between each story we see the fragment of the opening film and there are also commercial breaks. The fourth story deals with the police chase of a suspect, who shot his neighbour as the result of an argument. Again we hear voice over with a comment: *"Here is the tragic consequence of a small argument. On the one hand a man who is fighting against death in hospital, on the other hand, a life which is going to be wasted behind bars, because of the bullets he fired."* The fifth event is about police checks in the Bosphorus after the increase of sea accidents. The story begins by showing press cuttings reporting tragic accidents, and showing the victims. The camera crew accompanied the police in their boats on the Bosphorus. Finally we hear that: *"yes, almost all of these captains do not have licenses to man a boat or their licences have expired. Even this small scale operation is enough to show the indifference of boat owners. The coast guards, on the other hand, are trying to prevent this in spite of the poor resources they have."* The sixth, and final event, is about a man who smashed the windows of a warehouse under the influence of drink. The programme finishes with the same film, followed by a caption at the end: *"This programme is produced with the cooperation of the Istanbul Security Directorate and ATV. Our telephone and fax numbers:..."*

7.4. 'Paparazzi' Programmes and Sports Magazines

The recent outburst of some new programme genres which mainly focus on celebrities from show business, music and entertainment world and sports, particularly soccer players and clubs can be seen as another facet of the tabloidisation of Turkish television. In an effort to increase their ratings private television stations created some new programme prototypes which combine gossip with football and politics.⁵⁸

The pioneer of football-gossip programmes was *Televole*. Following the success of the programme in the audience ratings its production team were transferred from one channel to the other with astronomical fees. While the channel who lost the programme continued to use the title the programme had to change names like '*Real Televole*'. It has been a common practice of these programmes to use hidden cameras, which ushered a debate on the violation of privacy and ethics.

7.5. Conclusion

Tabloid television journalism in Turkey has emerged as a part, and parcel of the development of private electronic media. As has been the case in many different countries private television channels which have adopted a tabloid style reporting and devoted a generous share of their factual programming to reality shows of different nature, sports magazines and paparazzi programmes gained considerable audience figures. Thus, looking at the relative weight of different genres in the overall output of the commercial sector it can be argued that private channels so far tended to favour cheaper and more popular formats to current affairs programmes.

When confronted with the criticism that they have caused a trend for vulgarisation many private channels defended their choice by arguing that they respond to popular needs and tastes. High viewing figures for popular genres as well as more they claimed have indicated a high public interest in the kind of issues these programmes cover. TRT, on the other hand, so far has not produced any reality shows.

⁵⁸. Sina Kologlu, 'Evet-Hayir' (Yes-No), *Milliyet*, 12 February 1994.

Tabloid news on private channels focused on crime, tragedy, celebrities and bizarre happenings. The findings of the quantitative analysis showed that one fourth of news programmes consisted popular news stories. It was also found that private channels gave more coverage to these type of reports than the public television channel TRT. The characteristics of these stories were in conformity with the findings of research on popular news. While private channels focused on victims of personal dramas, TRT reported tragedies concerning larger number of people, and people who work for the public.

The analysis of the popular news items and reality programmes has offered interesting insights to how these stories relate to wider social, cultural, political and economic contexts in Turkish society. Some of the popular news stories contained conflicting and compromising ideological meanings, which already exist in Turkish politics, culture and social life. To achieve this, they seemed to use immediately recognisable, conceptually evocative, conventionalised vocabulary, figurative usages, metaphors, and metonymies to increase the emotional involvement of the audience. Moreover, they put heavy emphasis on individuals, their everyday conditions, and problems as if they exist in a room isolated from general social, political, and economic conditions, processes and problems. Therefore, they provided little causation and explanation to the real dilemmas facing Turkish society today.

CONCLUSION

The general political, and economic structures, and socio-cultural traditions prevalent in a society, have a determining influence on the news media. Journalistic practices and the news, are undoubtedly affected by the relationship between the media and the 'establishment', the degree of freedom of information, official media policies and regulations, as well as by the political, and ideological orientations, and the commercial motives of media companies. Therefore, in order to be able to fully comprehend the sociology of journalism and news production, it is necessary to examine all these factors with regard to their implications for mass media. However, any contemporary inquiry into broadcast journalism, should also take into account recent structural changes in electronic media as a result of the advances in new technologies, and market-minded approaches adopted towards them. As an important social institution, journalism has been, and will continue to be affected by technological changes and their repercussions for media markets. As discussed in the opening chapter of the present study the advent of satellite, cable, and digital broadcasting technologies has already substantially increased the number and variety of outlets for dissemination of news from local to global level. Although the privatisation, deregulation and globalisation of the broadcasting industries since the 1980s have opened up some new possibilities, they have also posed new threats.

This thesis has attempted to investigate various historical, political, social, economic, professional and organizational factors influencing journalism and broadcast news in Turkey. By drawing upon political economy and cultural theory, it has sought to provide explanations for the present problems and prospects of Turkish broadcast journalism, which have been transformed tremendously as a result of the chaotic privatization of electronic media since the early 1990s. By analysing television coverage of domestic economic and political issues, foreign news, and popular news, it has aimed to evaluate the impact of recent changes in the broadcasting system on the content, style and outlook of news programmes. The multi faceted nature of the research made it necessary to employ a combination of different methods. They were mainly the

quantitative and qualitative content analyses of television news programmes, interviews with broadcast journalists, and participant observation in the newsrooms as well as a review of all relevant first and second hand sources such as official publications, statistics, academic research and some commercial data like audience ratings.

Since the emergence of the first newspapers in the nineteenth century, the development of journalism in Turkey has been shaped by profound political, economic and societal transformations which continue to change Turkish society up to present day. As the second and the third chapters demonstrated, throughout most of its history the freedom and pluralism of Turkish journalism, have been restricted by a number of powerful factors. Due to political interventions and legal restrictions, which set limits on journalists' autonomy, and economic pressures, which were felt even harder in the periods of economic deterioration, the Turkish press failed to fully accomplish its democratic function as an independent observer and commentator on the political establishment. As argued in Chapter two, this was closely related to the level of democracy in the country. Despite efforts to consolidate democracy in Turkey in different periods since the introduction of the multi-party system in 1945, the freedom of press continues to suffer from legal pressures. Turkish journalists work within the boundaries of the 1982 Constitution, and of several other laws, such as the Anti-Terrorism Law which impose certain restrictions on the freedom of expression. Moreover, the regulation of the public broadcaster gives the government extensive powers in the appointment of TRT's managerial staff, and in controlling its funding and programming. On the other hand, journalists in the private sector are not completely unencumbered by organisational pressures, which force them to take into account the corporate and political interests of their employers. Chapter two argued that since the 1980s the organisational pressures on journalists working for private media, have been augmented because of increased commercialisation and dependency on advertising revenue, as well as concentration of ownership and the intricate ties of media companies with business world. The chaotic breakdown of the state monopoly over broadcasting in the 1990s, and the concomitant mushrooming of private radio and television channels, imported these trends into the field

of electronic media. Moreover, in the 1990s some serious political and social problems such as the Kurdish insurgency and the rise of political Islam, have added yet another dimension to the already difficult conditions under which Turkish journalists have to work.

In addition to legal and political restrictions, the professional context of journalism in Turkey has been another important factor rendering journalists vulnerable to external and internal pressures. Turkish journalists have yet to establish strong professional organisations which can help improve the ethical and professional standards of their profession, and defend their rights and freedom against the state, and powerful economic interest groups. The efforts of the Turkish Journalists Union and the Press Council in this direction have been by and large failures. Today the media sector in Turkey is one of the fields in which a fierce deunionisation policy is in place. The near absence of effective professional organisations and trade unions make it harder for journalists to address some very important problems, such as the decline of journalistic ethics and the accompanying public scepticism of news media in any meaningful way. As Chapter three has argued, the insufficiency of training and educational resources for journalists, constitutes another cause for concern for the improvement of the journalism profession in the long run.

Although extremely chaotic, the transition of Turkish television in the 1990s into a multi-channel system has had some positive consequences for broadcast journalism. Soon after their launch private channels discovered that news and current affairs programmes, due to their large audience following, can generate considerable commercial revenues. The result was the enormous increase in the number of outlets from local to national level. The emergence of local broadcasting channels enabled local people to articulate their views and needs, which was not possible during the era of TRT's monopoly. All these, as pointed out in Chapter four, strengthened television's role in Turkey as the primary source of information, due to a variety of economic and social factors, such as the low education and income level of the public, the weakness of local and regional press, and the concentration of national press in big metropolises.

Moreover, as important steps for the betterment of democracy have been taken private channels have opened the airwaves to different and controversial views, and they have challenged the official rhetoric of TRT. However, the analyses of the news programmes in Chapters five, six and seven revealed the presence of some contradictory tendencies as well. First of all, by concentrating on politics and political actors and largely ignoring other pressure groups, such as trade unions, television news programmes in Turkey mirrored the power structure of the society. While TRT news continued to reflect its traditional dependency on the state the close connections of the private media with business and commerce was evident in their news programmes. Chapter five argued that although the broadcast media in Turkey today is more diverse television news does not always reflect this pluralism. For instance, the coverage of the Customs Union between Europe and Turkey was in conformity with the views of the government and dominant economic groups. The mainstream channels appeared to be actively working to turn the public opinion in favour of the Turkey's economic integration with Europe. Meanwhile, the critical views on the Customs Union were given a very small, fragmented, and disparate coverage. Furthermore, as the analysis of the reporting of the civil servants' demonstrations demonstrated, the news failed to provide adequate background for important political, and economic affairs. Although, on the whole the coverage seemed to be favourable to the position of public servants it did not attempt to provide an understanding of the circumstances surrounding the issue. Instead, the reports focused on the demonstrations themselves as if they were isolated single events. Moreover, it was possible to discern some populist and emotive elements in the reporting of certain aspects of the story such as the plight of public servants under hardening economic conditions.

Chapter six indicated that, like news media around the world, Turkish television too had an ethnocentric bias and prioritized areas with which Turkey has some historical, cultural and religious ties. The analysis of the news coverage on the wars in Bosnia and Chechnya in Chapter six revealed that private media tended to have a populist and opportunist approach, which exploits the contradictions between the official ideology and popular sentiments. The fierce competition between major private channels for the

audience ratings led them to appeal to popular feelings and beliefs, which in these cases overwhelmingly in favour of Bosnian and Chechen Muslims. Moreover, the coverage of the crises in Bosnia and Chechnya was in most part ideologically closed and highly emotive, dramatizing the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina by portraying Serbs and Russians as villains while Bosnian Muslims and Chechens were described as heroes and victims. Furthermore, in relation to the Chechen conflict, private channels defied the official government policy which described the war as an internal matter of the Russian Federation. The objectivity of their reports became questionable as they frequently contained biased opinions, value-led expressions and emotions. This was in stark contrast to the traditional dull and straightforward coverage of TRT¹ which remained within the framework the official government policy.

Another worrying feature of Turkish broadcast journalism in the 1990s was its almost total adherence to commercial criteria. As has been the case in many different countries, private television channels have adopted a tabloid style of reporting and devoted a generous part of their programming to reality shows, sports magazines and paparazzi programmes which bring high audience ratings. These programmes have frequently caused controversy as they are accused of distorting the truth, violating private lives and attempting to influence the course of justice. While a variety of commercially driven formats have been making their way into prime time schedules serious, in-depth, and investigative current affairs reporting has been pushed towards the margins, and news programmes have been forced to incorporate some trivial and popular elements. As Chapter four argued, the competition for audience ratings has forced news programmes to be more and more visually appealing and entertaining.

To sum up, the privatisation and deregulation of electronic media in Turkey have had some contradictory consequences for broadcast journalism. On the one hand, they promised democratisation and liberalisation of the public sphere. On the other hand, however, they seem to have strengthened the tendencies in the direction of commercialisation and tabloidisation and contributed to the development of few conglomerates. These conglomerates, which rely heavily on public subsidies, threaten the

healthy formation of public opinion as they give priority to their commercial interests, and use their power to further their economic interests and to negotiate certain privileges with the politicians. As a result, Turkish television today seems to face a danger of transforming from state monopoly to a private one with alarming implications for its democratic functions. Whether this danger can be averted seems to depend on legal reforms, as well as some organizational changes, which should aim to provide the journalists working for television companies, especially for the TRT, with more professional autonomy from powerful political and economic interests.

What these changes should be, and how they should be carried out do not fall within the remit of this research. However, considering that it continues to be one of the least investigated fields so far the present study hopes to make a contribution, however tentatively, to the literature on broadcast media and journalism in Turkey.

APPENDIX

There were some occasions which caused breakdowns in the presentation and items were abandoned to be picked up later in the bulletin. In such cases the initial item number was re-used. In stories which were breaking as the programme was being broadcast, this was not done, and any return to the story for updating was given a new item number. Another problem encountered was with pick-up lines coming at the end of one item, e.g. following a film report the newscaster back-announces the name of the reporter. In such cases the back-announcement was timed as part of the follow-item.

The categories and subcategories used for the analysis of the news programmes in Chapter four, five, six and seven are described as follows:

1) Length, Quantity and Proportion of News Items: The total duration of news broadcast (except for peripheral features as mentioned earlier), the number of items and average time devoted to each news item will be measured.

2) News Formats: Regarding audio-visual presentation and different journalistic techniques used during the news, format of news will be divided into nine sub-categories:

Headlines: Brief summary of news items given at the start and end of the news bulletin or before the commercial breaks.

Newscaster: Pictureless segment of a news item, the introduction (cue or lead) to a report or recorded item, and linking or summarising sentences and comments between each news items. News items which contain no visual element and reported only by newscaster are classified under this subcategory .

News Film: News with moving picture segments; reports and comments from field correspondents, news agency films, archive or background news films.

Other visuals: Static pictures or animation such as still photographs, maps, graphics, freeze frames, tables, etc.

Studio interview: Newscaster, correspondents and guests in the studio or in a link up.

Film interview: Shots with interviews by correspondent.

Correspondent in studio: Reporter is interviewed in the studio or in a link up about a story he/she has been covering.

Correspondent on film: News items during which correspondent appears reporting on location and speaking to the camera.

3) News Topics: All news items are measured and classified into one of the following categories:

Political-International: This includes news items concerning diplomatic and political relations between two or more countries as well as activities of international organizations such as UN, EC, etc.

Political-Domestic: Events concerning the political statements, actions, practices and policies of the Parliament, government, municipal authorities, opposition parties and other interest groups; general and local elections, government changes and reshuffles.

Economy, Commerce, Industry: News related to the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services; the exchange or buying and selling of commodities within a country or between countries; news regarding economic indicators such as inflation, foreign debts as well as tax and employment policies; changes in national or international currencies and stock-exchange markets. This category also includes the dealings or relationships between the industrial enterprise and the employees, especially labour unions; strikes and industrial disputes or other forms of industrial action.

Military, Terrorism: This includes news stories concerning internal and foreign armed military forces and soldiers. This category also contains reports about the activities of domestic and foreign terrorist organisations as well as news about victims of violence.

Crime, Police, Judiciary: News items which regard the proceedings and verdicts of the courts, criminal events and the activities of the police force.

Tragedy, Disaster: News items which are one-off events such as earthquakes, fires, floods and traffic accidents that present a serious danger to human lives and material destruction.

Education: This category contains news and information about the activities of educational institutions and new developments in education world.

Culture, Art: Stories which deals with cultural activities such as festivals, exhibitions, concerts etc.

Health: This includes news about the new developments and changes in medicine, in the conditions of health system.

Science, Technology, Environment: News about scientific knowledge, technological developments and events of a particular interest for a scientific discipline such as astronomy and computers. News on pollution and environment is also included under this subcategory.

Human Interest: News stories which are defined as extraordinary, odd or bizarre thing that has happened to an ordinary person, children or animals.. All unusual, ironic or off-beat stories which have humorous, titillating, amusing or generally diverting material.

4) Origins: Four subcategory are defined as origins of news stories:

Home News: News items that concerns domestic matters, personalities, and events that take place within the national borders of the media under investigation.

Home News Abroad: News items that involves the activities of home personalities and organisations abroad. the bulk of this category is comprised of the travel and visits of politicians to foreign countries.

Foreign News: News events that take place outside the national borders and concerns, the activities of foreign nationalities and international bodies.

Foreign News at Home: News items about the events and actions that involves for nationals within the national borders of the media country such as the travel of foreign dignitaries, the official statements of a foreign ambassador, international conferences and meetings.

5) Main Actors in Domestic News Stories: This category is divided according to the main political actors appeared on news bulletins:

President: News about the Presidency and the President himself.

Parliament: Members of parliament.

Prime Minister: Stories in which the formal or informal activities of the Prime Minister are dominant.

Government: Government as a whole, and the members of the cabinet.

Ruling Parties: Members of ruling parties who do not take a responsibility within the government.

Opposition parties: All political parties outside the government and their individual members.

Local governments: Members of local governments.

Military, terrorists: Members of the armed forces of the country, and of domestic terrorist organisations.

Industrialists, businessmen: People who own or are engaged in the management of an industrial asset or a business and members of industrial or business associations.

Labour Unions, workers: Trade unions, workers, employees of private or public companies.

Other Interest Groups: Members or associations of other democratic organisations and groups.

Experts: People who are specialised on a particular political, economic or scientific subjects from their professional or academic field.

Celebrities: Entertainment, art or sport celebrities who are well-known by the public.

Ordinary people: News stories that ordinary people are the main actors.

6) Location of Foreign News Stories:

Supranational Organisations: News items regarding the activities of International bodies such as UN, EC etc.

Multinational: News events which happened in more than one country.

West Europe: Member countries of EC, Scandinavian countries, Switzerland.

East Europe and Russia: Former socialist countries in Europe, Russia, Baltic Sea Republics and Central Asian states.

Middle East: Arabic speaking countries and Iran.

North America: USA and Canada.

Latin America: South and Central American countries.

Africa: North, central and south African states.

Asia and Far East: India, China, Japan and other countries in East and South and South East Asia..

Other countries: Australia and islands in Pacific Ocean, other locations of the world which are not included in the categories above.

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